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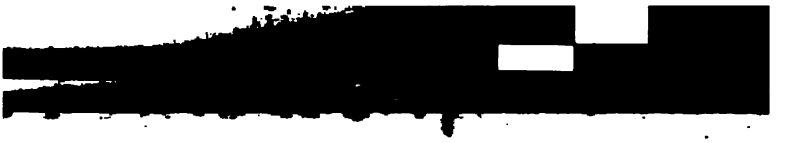
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ROUND ABOUT THE CARPATHIANS

BY

ANDREW F. CROSSE

FELLOW OF THE CHEMICAL SOCIETY

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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ROUND ABOUT THE CARPATHIANS.

CHAPTER I.

Down the Danube from Buda-Pest—Amusements on board the steamer—Basiash—Drive to Oravicza by Weisskirchen—Ladies of Oravicza—Gipsy music—Finding an old schoolfellow—The *czardas*.

ONE glorious morning in June 1875, I, with the true holiday feeling at heart, for the world was all before me, stepped on board the Rustchuk steamer at Buda-Pest, intending to go down the Danube as far as Basiash.

Your express traveller, whose aim it is to get to the other end of everywhere in the shortest possible time, will take the train instead of the boat to Basiash, and there catch up the steamer, saving fully twelve hours on the way. This time the man in a hurry is not so far wrong; the Danube between Buda-Pest and the defile of Kasan is almost devoid of what the regular tourist would call respectable scenery. There are few objects of interest, except the mighty river itself.

Now the steamer has its advantages over the train, for surely nowhere in this locomotive world can a man more thoroughly enjoy "sweetly doing nothing" than on board one of these river-boats. You are wafted swiftly onward through pure air and sunshine; you have an armchair under the awning; of course an amusing French novel; besides, truth to say, there is plenty to amuse you on board. Once past Vienna, your moorings are cut from the old familiar West; the costumes, the faces, the architecture, and even the way of not doing things, have all a flavour of the East.

What a hotch-potch of races, so to speak, all in one boat, but ready to do anything rather than pull together; even here, between stem and stern of our Danube steamer, are Magyars, Germans, Servians, Croats, Roumanians, Jews, and gipsies. They are all unsatisfied people with aspirations; no two are agreed —everybody wants something else down here, and how Heaven is to grant all the prayers of those who have the grace to pray, or how otherwise to settle the Eastern Question, I will not pretend to say.

Meanwhile the world amuses itself—I mean the microcosm on board the steamer: people, ladies not excepted, play cards, drink coffee, and smoke, There is a good opportunity of studying the latest Parisian fashions, as worn by Roumanian belles;

they know how to dress, do those handsome girls from Bucharest.

When steam navigation was first established on the Danube, as long ago as 1830, Prince Demidoff remarked, that "in making the Danube one of the great commercial highways of the world, steam had united the East with the West." It was a smart saying, but it was not a thing accomplished when the Prince wrote his Travels, nor is it now; for though the "Danube Steam Navigation Company" have been running their boats for nearly half a century, they are in difficulties, "chiefly," says Mr Révy,[1] "from the neglect of all river improvements between Vienna and Buda-Pest, and between Basiash and Turn-Severin." He goes on to say that the dearest interests of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy are involved in the rectification of the course of the Danube, recommending a Royal Commission to be appointed. Those who follow the course of the river may see for themselves how little has been done, and how much remains to be done before it can be safely reckoned one of the great commercial highways of the world.

We had started from Buda-Pest on Monday morning at seven o'clock, and arrived at Basiash at nine

[1] The Danube at Buda-Pest. Report addressed to Count Andrassy by J. J. Révy, C.E. 1876.

the following morning. We were fortunate in not having been detained anywhere by shallow water, so often the cause of delay by this route.

Up to the present time Basiash is the terminus of the railway; it is a depôt for coal brought from the interior, and though not out of its teens, is a place fast growing into importance.

As my object was to get to Oravicza in the Banat, I had done with the steamboat, and intended taking the rail to my destination; but, in the "general cussedness" of things, there turned out to be no train till the evening. I did not at all enjoy the prospect of knocking about the whole day amongst coal-sheds and unfinished houses, with the alternative refuge of the inn, which was swarming with flies and redolent of many evil smells; so I thought I would find some conveyance and drive over, for the distance was not great. If there is anything I hate, it is waiting the livelong day for a railway train.

There chanced to be an intelligent native close by who divined my thoughts, for I had certainly not uttered them; he came up, touched me on the arm, and pointed round the corner. Notwithstanding the intense heat of the day, the Wallack, for such he was, wore an enormous sheepskin cloak with the wool outside, as though ready for an Arctic winter. I followed him a few steps to see what he wanted me



to look at; the movement was quite enough, he regarded it evidently in the light of ready assent, and in the twinkling of an eye he possessed himself of my portmanteau and other belongings, motioned me to follow him, which I did, and then found that my Heaven-sent friend had a machine for hire.

I call it a machine, because it was not like anything on wheels I had seen before: later on I became familiar enough with the carts of the country; they are long-bodied, rough constructions, wonderfully adapted to the uneven roads. In this case there were four horses abreast, which sounds imposing, as any four-in-hand must always do.

I now asked the Wallack in German if he could drive me to Oravicza, for I saw he had made up his mind to drive me somewhere. To my relief I found he could speak German, at all events a few words. He replied he could drive the "high and nobly born Excellency" there in four hours. The time was one thing, but the charge was quite another affair. His demand was so outrageous that I supposed it was an implied compliment to my exalted rank: certainly it had no adequate reference to the services offered. The fellow asked enough to buy the whole concern outright—cart and four horses! They were the smallest horses I almost ever saw, and were further reduced by the



nearest shave of being absolute skeletons; the narrow line between sustaining life and actual starvation must have been nicely calculated.

We now entered upon the bargaining phase, a process which threatened to last some time; all the stragglers in the place assisted at the conference, taking a patriotic interest in their own countryman. The matter was finally adjusted by the Wallack agreeing to take a sixth part of the original sum.

Seated on a bundle of hay, with my things around me, I was now quite ready for the start, but the driver had a great many last words with the public, which the interest in our proceedings had gathered about us. Presently with an air of triumph he took his seat, gave a loud crack or two with his whip, and off we started at a good swinging trot, just to show what his team could accomplish.

We took the road to Weisskirchen, leaving the Danube in the rear. The country was fairly pretty, but nothing remarkable; fine scenery under the circumstances would have been quite superfluous, for the dust was two feet deep in the road, and the heels of four horses scampering along raised such a cloud of it that we could see next to nothing.

We had not proceeded far when the spe



sensibly relaxed; I fancy the horses went slower that they might listen to what the driver had to say, he talked to them the whole time. He was not communicative to me; his knowledge of German seemed limited to the bargaining process, a lesson often repeated, I suspect. As time wore on the heat became almost tropical; as for the dust, I felt as if I had swallowed a sandbank, and was joyful at the near prospect of quenching my thirst at Weisskirchen, now visible in the distance.

Hungarian towns look like overgrown villages that have never made up their minds seriously to become towns. The houses are mostly of one story, standing each one alone, with the gable-end, blank and windowless, towards the road. This is probably a relic of Orientalism.

Getting up full speed as we approached the town, we clattered noisily over the crown of the causeway, and suddenly making a sharp turn, found ourselves in the courtyard of the inn.

I inquired how long we were to remain here; "A small half-hour," was the driver's answer. This was my first experience of a Wallack's idea of time, if indeed they have any ideas on the subject beyond the rising and the setting of the sun.

I strolled about the place, but there was not

much to be done in the time, and I got very tired of waiting: the "half-hour" was anything but "small;" however, one must be somewhere, and in Hungary waiting comes a good deal into the day's work. I was rather afraid my Wallack was indulging too freely in *slivovitz*—otherwise plum-brandy—a special weakness of theirs; but after an intolerable delay we got off at last.

Soon after leaving the town we came upon an encampment of gipsies; their tents looked picturesque enough in the distance, but on nearer approach the illusion was entirely dispelled. In appearance they were little better than savages; children even of ten years of age, lean, mop-headed creatures, were to be seen running about absolutely naked. As Mark Twain said, "they wore nothing but a smile," but the smile was a grimace to try to extract coppers from the traveller. Two miles farther on we came upon fourteen carts of gipsies, as wild a crew as one could meet all the world over. Some of the men struck me as handsome, but with a single exception the women were terribly unkempt-looking creatures.

It was fully six o'clock before we reached Oravicza; the drive of twenty-five miles had taken eight hours instead of four, as the Wallack had profanely promised.



We entered the town with a feeble attempt at a trot, but the poor brutes of horses were dead beat, and neither the pressure of public opinion nor the suggestive cracking of the driver's whip could arouse them to becoming activity.

Oravicza is very prettily situated on rising ground, and the long winding street, extending more than two miles, turns with the valley. Crawling along against collar the whole way, I thought the street would never end. There are very few Magyar inhabitants in this place, which is pretty equally divided between Germans and Wallacks; the lower part of the town belongs to the latter, and is known as Roman Oravicza, in distinction to Deutsch Oravicza. The population is altogether about seven thousand.

I fancy not many strangers pass this way, for never was a shy Englishman so stared at as this dust-begrimmed traveller. I became painfully self-conscious of the generally disreputable appearance of my cart and horses, the driver and myself, when two remarkably pretty girls tripped by, casting upon me well-bred but amused glances. All the womenkind of Oravicza must have turned out at this particular hour, for I had hardly passed the sisters with the arched eyebrows, when I came upon another group of young ladies, who were

laughing and talking together. I think they grew merrier as I approached, and I am quite sure I was hotter than I had been all day. "Confound the fellow! can't he turn into an innyard—anywhere out of the main street?" thought I, giving my driver a poke. He knew perfectly well where he was about to take me, and no significant gestures of mine hastened him forward in the very least. Presently, without any warning, we did turn into a side opening, but so suddenly that the whole vehicle had a wrench, and the two hind wheels jolted over a high kerbstone. Meanwhile the group of damsels were still in close confab, and I could see took note that the stranger had descended at the Krone. We were all in a heap in the courtyard, but we had to extricate ourselves as best we could, for not a soul was to be seen, though we had made noise enough certainly to announce our arrival.

I pulled repeatedly at the bell before I could rouse the *hausknecht*, and induce him to make an appearance. At length he deigned to emerge from the recesses of the dirty interior. Having discharged the Wallack in a satisfied frame of mind (he had the best of the bargain after all), I was at leisure to follow mine host to inspect the accommodation he had to offer me. A sanitary commis-

sioner would have condemned it, but *en voyage comme en voyage.* With some difficulty and delay I procured water enough to fill the pie-dish that did duty for the washing apparatus. I had an old relative of extremely Low Church proclivities who was always repeating—for my edification, I suppose —that "man is but dust;" the dear old lady would have said so in very truth if she had seen me on this occasion.

After supper I strolled into the summer theatre, a simple erection, consisting of a stage at the end of a pretty, shady garden. Seats and tables were placed under the lime-trees, and here the happy people of Oravicza enjoy their amusements in the fresh air, drinking coffee and eating ices. Think of the luxury of fresh air, O ye frequenters of London theatres!

The evening was already advanced, the tables were well filled; groups gathered here and there, sauntering under the greenery, gay with lanterns; and many a blue-eyed maiden was there, with looks coquettish yet demure, as German maidens are wont to appear.

A concert was going on, and I for the first time heard a gipsy band. Music is an instinct with these Hungarian gipsies. They play by ear, and with a marvellous precision, not surpassed by musi-



cians who have been subject to the most careful training. Their principal instruments are the violin, the violoncello, and a sort of zither. The airs they play are most frequently compositions of their own, and are in character quite peculiar, though favourite pieces from Wagner and other composers are also given by them with great effect. I heard on this occasion one of the gipsy airs which made an indelible impression on my mind; it seemed to me the thrilling utterance of a people's history. There was the low wail of sorrow, of troubled passionate grief, stirring the heart to restlessness, then the sense of turmoil and defeat; but upon this breaks suddenly a wild burst of exultation, of rapturous joy—a triumph achieved, which hurries you along with it in resistless sympathy. The excitable Hungarians can literally become intoxicated with this music—and no wonder. You cannot reason upon it, or explain it, but its strains compel you to sensations of despair and joy, of exultation and excitement, as though under the influence of some potent charm.

I strolled leisurely back to the inn, beneath the starlit heavens. The outline of the mountains was clearly marked in the distance, and in the foreground quaint gable-ends mixed themselves up with the shadows and the trees—a pretty picture

prettier than anything one can see by the light of "common day."

The following morning I set about making inquiries respecting the mines which I knew existed in the neighbourhood of Oravicza. I found that an English gentleman owned a gold mine in the immediate vicinity, and that he was then living in the town. This induced me to go off at once to call upon him, and I was immediately received in a very friendly manner. This accidental meeting was rather curious, for on comparing notes we found that we had been schoolfellows together at Westminster. H—— being my senior, we had not known each other well; but meeting here in the wilds, we were as old familiar friends. H—— kindly insisted on my leaving the inn and taking up my quarters with him in his bachelor residence, which was in fact big enough to accommodate a whole form of Westminster boys. I was not at all sorry to avoid a second night at the Krone, and gladly fell into my friend's hospitable arrangements.

I was in great luck altogether, for that very evening a dance was to come off at Oravicza, and my friend invited me to accompany him. Dancing is one of the sins I compound for; moreover, I had a lively recollection of the bright eyes I had encountered yesterday.

Oravicza is a central place, in a way the chief town of the Banat. It has a pleasant little society, composed of the families of the officials, and of the military stationed there; they are mostly German by origin. Amongst the belles of the evening I soon discovered my merry critics of yesterday. I was duly presented, and we laughed together over my "first appearance." It was one of the pleasantest evenings I ever remember. I hate long invitations to anything agreeable; this party, for instance, had the charm of unexpectedness. If unfortunately I should prove not quite good enough to go to heaven, I think it would be very pleasant to stop at Oravicza—supposing, of course, that my friends all stopped there as well.

Here I first danced the *czardas;* it is an epoch in a man's life, but you must see it, feel it, dance it, and, above all, hear the gipsy music that inspires it. This is the national dance of the Hungarians, favoured by prince and peasant alike. The figures are very varied, and represent the progress of a courtship where the lady is coy, and now retreats and now advances; her partner manifests his despair, she yields her hand, and then the couple whirl off together to the most entrancing tones of wild music, such as St. Anthony himself could not have resisted.

CHAPTER II.

Consequences of trying to buy a horse—An expedition into Servia —Fine scenery—The peasants of New Moldova—Szechenyi road—Geology of the defile of Kasan—Crossing the Danube—Milanovacz — Drive to Maidenpek — Fearful storm in the mountains—Miserable quarters for the night—Extent of this storm—The disastrous effects of the same storm at Buda-Pest —Great loss of life.

My friend H—— is the very impersonation of sound practical sense. The next morning he coolly broke in upon my raptures over the beauty of the Oravicza ladies by saying, "You want to buy a horse, don't you?"

Of course I did, but my thoughts were elsewhere at the moment, and with some reluctance I took my hat and followed my friend to interview a Wallack who had heard that I was a likely purchaser, and brought an animal to show me. It would not do at all, and we dismissed him.

A little later we went out into the town, and I thought there was a horse-fair; I should think we met a dozen people at least who came up to accost me on the subject of buying a horse. And such a



collection of animals!—wild colts from the Pustza that had never been ridden at all, and other ancient specimens from I know not where, which could never be ridden again — old, worn-out roadsters. There were two or three good horses, but they were only fit for harness. I was so bothered every time I put my nose out of doors by applications from persons anxious to part with their property in horse-flesh, that I wished I had kept my intentions locked in my own breast. I was pestered for days about this business. There was an old Jew who came regularly to the house three times a-day to tell me of some other paragon that he had found. When he saw that it was really of no use, he then complained loudly that I had wasted his precious time, that he had given up every other occupation for the sake of finding me a horse. I dismissed this Jew, telling him pretty sharply to go about his own business for once, adding that nothing should induce me to buy a horse in Oravicza.

One day H—— informed me that he was going over to Servia on a matter of business, and if I liked to accompany him, I should see something of the country, and perhaps I might find there a horse to suit me. The Servian horses are said to be a useful breed, strong though small, and very enduring for a long march.

I was very ready for the expedition, so we hired a *leiterwagen*, which is in fact a long cart with sides like a ladder, peculiarly suitable for rough work. I was much surprised to find the Hungarians far less often in the saddle than I expected; it is true, nobody walks, not even the poorest peasant, but they drive, as a rule.

We started one fine July morning in our machine for Moldova on the Danube. The first place we came to was Szaszka, a mining village. Close by are copper mines and smelting-works belonging to the States Railway Company. I was told that they do not pay as well as formerly, owing to the fact that the ore now being worked is poorer than before; it yields only two per cent. of copper, a very low average. Nothing could well exceed the dirt of Szaszka; we merely stopped long enough to feed the horses, and were glad to get off again.

On leaving this place the road immediately begins to ascend the mountain, and may be described as a sort of pass over a spur of the Carpathians. It was a very beautiful drive, favoured as we were, too, with fine weather. The road on the northern side is even well made, ascending in regular zigzags. After gaining the summit, we left the post-road that we had hitherto traversed, and took our way to the right, descending through



a forest. The varied foliage was very lovely, and the shade afforded us most grateful. It was an original notion driving through such a place, for, according to my ideas, there was no road at all; but H——, more accustomed to the country, declared it was not so bad, at least he averred that there were other roads much worse. The jolting we got over the ruts and stones exceeded anything in my previous experience. How the cart kept itself together was a marvel to me, but it accommodated itself by a kind of snakelike movement, not characteristic of wheeled vehicles in general. Except for the honour and glory of driving, I would as lief have walked, and I think have done the journey nearly as soon; but my friend observed, "It was no good giving into bad roads down in this part of the world."

At one of the worst turnings we met several bullock-carts filled with iron pyrites from the copper-smelting. The custom of the drivers of these carts is to stop at the bottom of a steep bit of hill, and then put five or six pairs of oxen to draw up one cart. The process is a slow one, but is better for the oxen. We had great difficulty in passing in safety, for unluckily at the spot we met them the trees were so thick that they literally walled up the road, and on the other side there



chanced to be a very uninviting precipice, and of course we had the place of honour.

Soon after this little excitement was over we came upon a fine view of the Danube, with a long stretch of Servian forests beyond. On we jolted, till at length New Moldova was reached: this place has smelting-furnaces, and in the neighbourhood are extensive copper mines. The district is known as the Banat of Temesvar, an extensive area of the most fertile land in Europe; rich black soil, capable of growing any number of crops in succession without dressing. This part of Hungary supplies the finest white flour, so much esteemed by the Vienna bakers, and now sought after by the pastrycooks in England.

There was a fair going on at New Moldova, which afforded me an opportunity of seeing the peasants in their gala dresses. The place is renowned for its pretty Wallack girls, and I certainly can bear witness that I saw not a few handsome faces. But what struck me most was the graceful movements of these damsels: their manner of walking was the very poetry of motion. I daresay it was the more striking to me because I had recently come from England, where fashion condemns the wearers of high-heeled shoes to a rickety waddle! Even here, in these wilds, fashion maintains a

despotic rule. I understand black hair is the thing at present, so every Wallack maiden dyes her hair to the regulation colour, though Nature, who never makes a mistake, may have matched her complexion with auburn locks.

The costume is very pretty and peculiar; it consists of a loose chemise, a short skirt of home-spun, with a double apron front and back, formed of a very deep thick fringe of various colours. This peculiar garment is called an *obreska;* I think it has no counterpart in female fashions elsewhere. When the under-garment is white and fresh the effect is very good; but in the case of the very poor, if there are but scanty rags beneath, then, to speak mildly, the fringe is an inefficient covering. But to-day every damsel is in her best; and how jauntily she wears the coloured scarf twisted round her head, which falls in graceful folds! The Wallacks generally have their bare feet covered, not with boots, but with thongs of leather, something in the form of a sandal. The Servian women dress quite differently, wear tight-fitting garments, richly embroidered when their means permit. The men also figure largely in embroidery.

In the evening the peasants had a dance on the open space in front of the *czarda,* or village inn.

Of course we were there to look on. I should observe that we had arranged to stay the night at Moldova, for the afternoon had been taken up in visiting a large manufactory for sulphuric acid in the neighbourhood. The dance which wound up the day's amusements can be easily described. "Many a youth and many a maid" form a wide circle with arms interlaced, they move round and round in a marzurka step to the sound of music. It appeared to me rather slow and monotonous. I do not know whether the figure breaks up, leaving each couple more to their own devices; but we left them still revolving in a circle.

The following morning we were off on our travels again. A short drive took us to Old Moldova, a village within the Military Frontier, regularly constructed, with guardhouse and other Government buildings, facing the Danube. At this point begins the splendid road by the side of the river, made by the Hungarian Government in 1840. It reaches as far as Orsova, taking the left bank of the Danube. It would have been easier to have followed Trajan's lead, and have made the road on the right bank; but there were political reasons for deciding otherwise. The Hungarian Government, as a matter of course, would only construct this great work within

their own territory: the other side of the river is Servian. The engineering difficulties in making this road were very great, but they have been everywhere overcome, and the result is a splendid piece of work.

Arriving at the Danube, we took a steamboat that would land us in Milanovacz in Servia. The scenery here is magnificent; we were now in the defile of Kasan. The waters of the mighty river are contracted within a narrow gorge, which in fact cleaves asunder the Carpathian range for a space of more than fifty miles. The limestone rock forms a precipitous wall on either side, rising in some places to an altitude of more than two thousand feet sheer from the water's edge. The scenery of this wonderful pass is very varied; the bare rock with its vertical precipice gives place to a disturbed broken mass of cliff and scaur, flung about in every sort of fantastic form, or towering aloft like the ruined ramparts of some Titan's castle. Over all this a luxuriant vegetation has thrown a veil of exceeding beauty.

The fact of the Danube forcing its way through the Carpathian chain in this remarkable manner is a very interesting problem to the geologists, and deserves more careful investigation at their hands than perhaps it has yet received. They seem pretty

well agreed in saying that there must have been a time when the waters were bayed back, and when the vast Hungarian plain was an inland sea or great lake.

Professor Hull, in a recent paper on the subject,[1] states the fact of the plains of Hungary being "overspread by sands, gravels, and a kind of mud called *loess*, or by alluvial deposits underlaid by fresh-water limestones, which may be considered as having been formed beneath an inland lake, during different periods of repletion or partial exhaustion, dating downwards from the Miocene period."

The Professor goes on to say that "at intervals along the skirts of the Carpathians, and in more central detached situations, volcanoes seem to have been in active operation, vomiting forth masses of trachytic and basaltic lava, which were sometimes mingled with the deposits forming under the waters of the lakes. The connection of these great sheets of water with these active volcanic eruptions in Hungary has been pointed out by the late Dr. Daubeny. The gorge of Kasan, and the ridge about 700 feet above the present surface of the stream, appear to have once barred the passage of the river. At this time the waters must have

[1] Hungary and the Lower Danube, by Professor Hull, F.R.S., in Dublin University Magazine, March 1874.

been pent up several hundred feet above the present surface, and thus have been thrown back on the plains of Hungary. It was only necessary that the barrier should be cut through in order to lay dry these plains by draining the lakes. This was probably effected by the ordinary process of river excavation, and partly by the formation of underground channels scooped out amongst the limestone rocks of the gorge. These two modes of excavation acting together may have hastened the lowering of the channel and the drainage of the plains above considerably; nevertheless the time required for such a work must have been extended, and it would appear that while the great inland lakes were being drained, the volcanic fires were languishing, and ultimately became extinct. Hungary thus presents us with phenomena analogous to those which are to be found in the volcanic district of Central France." It is a significant fact that even at the present day the waters of the Platten See and other lakes and swamps are diminishing, showing that the draining process is still going on.

The extent of the great lake of prehistoric times is forcibly brought before us by the fact that the Alföld, or great plain of Hungary, comprises an area of 37,400 square miles! Here is found the *Tiefland*, or deep land, so wonderfully fertile that the

cultivator need only scratch the soil to prepare it for his crop.

As it only took us four hours by steamer to go from Alt Moldova to Milanovacz, we calculated that we might reach Maidenpek, our destination in Servia, the same day by borrowing a few hours from the night, as an Irishman would say. However, it turned out that there was so much bargaining and dawdling about at Milanovacz before we could settle on a conveyance that we did not get away till six o'clock—too late a great deal, considering the rough drive we had before us. Immediately after starting we began to wind our way up the mountain. The views were splendid. The Danube at this part again spreads out, having the appearance of a lake something like the Rhine near Bingen. We looked right over into Transylvania and Roumania from the commanding position afforded by the terraced road up which we slowly toiled.

We had hardly gained the highest point when we remarked that the sky was becoming rapidly overcast by clouds from the west. Our Servian driver swore it would not rain; he knew the signs of the weather, he said, but as he applied the whip and galloped his horses at every available opportunity, it was clear he had an inner consciousness of coming trouble.



The road now led through a forest. Here and there a gap in the thick foliage gave us a glimpse of the distant landscape, and of the curious atmospheric effects produced by the coming storm. The clouds rolled up behind us in dense masses, throwing the near mountains into deep shadow, while the plain far beneath was flooded with bright sunshine.

The effect, however, was transitory, for the dark shadow soon engulfed the distant plain, blurring the fair scene even while we looked upon it. The change was something marvellous, so sudden and so complete. Up to this time the air had been still, and very hot; but suddenly a fierce wind came upon us with a hoarse roar—almost like the waves of the sea—up the valley and over the hill-top it came, right down upon us, tearing at the forest-trees. The branches, in all the full foliage of leafy June, swayed to and fro as the wind went roaring and shrieking down the hillside; the next moment the earth shook with the clap of a terrific burst of thunder.

The horses stood still and shuddered in their harness, and it was with difficulty they were made to go on. It was evident the storm was right over us, for now succeeded flash upon flash of forked lightning, with thunder-claps that were instantaneous and unceasing.

At the same time the windows of heaven w

opened upon us, or rather the sluices of heaven it seemed to me; for the rain descended in sheets, not streams, of water. Without any adventitious difficulties, the road was as objectionable as a road could be; deep ruts alternated with now a bare bit of rock strewn with treacherous loose stones, and now a sharp curve with an ugly slant towards the precipice.

About half an hour after the storm first broke upon us it had become night, indeed it was so dark that we could hardly see a pace in advance. The repeated flashes of lightning helped us to make out our position from time to time, and we trusted to the horses mainly to get us along in the safe middle course. At moments when the heavens were lit up, I could see the swaying branches of the fir-trees high above us battling with the wind, for we were still in the forest. The sound of many waters around on every side forcibly impressed us with the notion that we must be washed away—a result not by any means improbable, for the road we traversed was little better than a watercourse.

I have experienced storms in Norway, and in the Swiss and Austrian Alps, but I never remember anything to equal this outburst of the elements.

To stop still or to go forward was almost equally difficult, but we struggled on somehow at the rate, I

should think, of a mile and a half in the hour. The horses were thoroughly demoralised, as one says of defeated troops, and stumbled recklessly at every obstacle. The driver was a stupid fellow, without an ounce of pluck in his composition, and declared more than once that he would not go on, preferring to stop under such shelter as the trees afforded. We were of another mind, and insisted on his pushing on. One of us walked at the horses' heads, and thus we splashed and blundered on for three mortal hours, wishing all the time that we had slept at Milanovacz. The route became so much worse that I declared we must have missed the track. We were apparently in a deep gully, traversed by a mountain torrent hardly a foot below the level of our road; but the Servian said he knew we were "all right," and that we should come directly to a house where we could get shelter.

He had hardly spoken when H—— descried some lights not very far ahead, and in less than ten minutes we came alongside a good-sized hut, which turned out to be the welcome wine-shop the driver had promised us. Here was a roof anyhow, so we entered, hoping for supper and beds in the wayside inn. All our host could produce was very good bottle of Servian "black" wine and soi

coarse bread of the country, so stale that we could hardly break it. This wine, which is almost as black as ink, comes from Negotin, lower down the Danube, and is rather a celebrated vintage I was informed.

It was only in my untravelled mind that the idea of "beds" existed at all. H—— knew better than to expect anything of the kind. All we could do was to examine the place we were in with reference to passing the night. The floor of the room consisted of hard stamped clay, which from the drippings of our garments had become damp and slightly adhesive to the tread. The furniture consisted of a few rough stools and three tables. There was no question of any other apartment, there being only a dark hole in the rear sacred to the family, into which every sense we possessed forbade us to intrude. In peering about with the candles we found that the floor was perfectly alive with insects —such strange forms, awful in their strangeness —interesting, I daresay, to the entomologist, but simply disgusting to one not given to collecting specimens.

If I were dying I could not have laid myself down on that floor, so we dragged the three tables together. They were provokingly uneven, but with the aid of a sheepskin *bunda*, and our carpet-

bags for pillows, we contrived something upon which to rest our tired limbs. I should observe we had partially dried ourselves by a miserable fire fed with wet wood; in fact, everything was wet —our plaids were soaked, and were useless as coverlets.

We had agreed to keep one candle burning, with the further precaution that we should sleep and tie through the night; for it was a cut-throat-looking place, and the countenance of the ordinary Servian is not reassuring. It fell to my lot to have the first watch, and I lay awake staring at the roof, no great height above us. Its dirt-stained rafters were lit up by the candle, and I soon became aware that the mainbody of the insects was performing a strategic movement highly creditable to the attacking party—they dropped down upon us from the beams! I will not pursue the subject farther, but as long as the candle burned I did not sleep a wink. I suppose I must have dozed off towards morning, for H—— roused me from a state of semi-unconsciousness, and "up we got and shook our lugs."

The first thing I saw on pushing open the door was the steaming carcass of a sheep hung just outside, with a pool of blood on the very threshold! In many places in Eastern Europe they have

the disgusting habit of slaughtering the animals in the middle of the street.

As soon as we had swallowed a cup of hot coffee, which is always good in this part of the world, we lost no time in clearing out of the wretched hovel where we had passed the night. On every side there were traces of last night's tempest—trees uprooted and lying across the road, walls blown down, and watercourses overflowing. It came to my knowledge later that we got part of the same storm that had fallen with such devastating fury on Buda-Pest just twenty-four hours earlier.[1]

[1] Extract of a private letter, dated Buda-Pest, June 28th, from Mr Landor Crosse, which appeared in the 'Daily News,' July 6, 1875: "We have had one of the most dreadful storms that has happened here in the memory of man. I must tell you that on Saturday evening I was taking my coffee and cigar in the beautiful gardens of the Isle St Marguerite, opposite Buda-Pest, when a little after six o'clock a fearful hurricane arose very suddenly, sweeping over us with terrific force. Branches of trees were carried along like feathers. After this came a dreadful thunderstorm, accompanied by rain and hail, the hail breaking windows right and left, even those that were made of plate-glass. The hailstones were on an average the size of walnuts, and some very much larger. Two trees were struck by lightning within thirty yards of me. I had a narrow escape, for these large trees were shattered, and the fragments dispersed by the hurricane; it was an awful moment, and I shall never forget it as long as I live.

"Yesterday I went over to the Buda side, where twenty houses have been entirely washed away. Nearly the whole of the town is flooded, and every street converted into a river five or six feet in depth. It is estimated that more than two hundred people have been drowned. . . . On Sunday morning I saw the Danube bear-

It is a fact worth noting that this storm affected a large area of Europe, travelling north-west to south-east. A friend writing from the neighbourhood of Dresden made mention of a severe storm on the 24th of June; it broke upon Buda on the 26th, reaching us down in Servia on the 27th.

ing swiftly away the terrible wreckage of the storm. There were large articles of furniture, the bodies of men, women, and children, together with horses and cows, all floating on the whirling waters. . . . It rained a waterspout for nearly five hours, and in consequence the small valleys leading down from the mountain were in some places thirty feet deep, for a time, in rushing water. . . . The tramways in some places are destroyed; the mountain railway wrecked; the vineyards on the hillside simply ruined. . . . You will scarcely credit me when I tell you that a house situated at the bottom of the valley and near the railway station was literally battered in by a *drift* of hailstones. The doors and windows were burst in before the inmates could escape, and they were actually buried alive in ice. When I saw the house twenty-two hours afterwards it was still four feet deep in hailstones, though they had been clearing them away with spades. Just as I got there they recovered the body of a poor woman who had perished. From this spot, and for about a mile up the valley, no less than fifty-seven bodies were found."

CHAPTER III.

Maidenpek—Well-to-do condition of Servians—Lady Mary Wortley Montague's journey through Servia—Troubles in Bulgaria—Communists at Negotin—Copper mines—Forest ride—Robbers on the road—Kucainia—Belo-breska—Across the Danube—Detention at customhouse—Weisskirchen—Sleeping Wallacks.

We reached Maidenpek without further mishap, and here I began to make inquiries again about a horse. I was informed that in some of the villages farther up I should be sure to find the sort of horse I wanted, and not sorry for an excuse for exploring the country, I agreed to go, at the same time getting my friend to join me.

We hired some horses for the expedition, and set off, a party of four: three Englishmen (for we had picked up a friend at Maidenpek) and a Serb attendant, who was to act as our guide. He rode a small plucky horse, being armed with a long Turkish gun slung over his shoulder, while his belt was stuck full of strange-looking weapons, worthy of an old-curiosity shop. We were mounted on serviceable little nags, and had also our revolvers.

The ride was truly enjoyable. We soon left the

road, and took our way along a forest path in Indian file, our picturesque guide leading the way. The path came to an end before long, and we then followed the course of a little stream; but as it wound about in a most tortuous manner we were obliged to be continually crossing and recrossing. Sometimes we rode through a jungle of reeds, at least eight feet high; then we had to scramble up a sandy bank. The horses were like cats, and did their scrambling well; and at rare intervals we found ourselves on a fair stretch of open lawn which fringes the dense forest. There were bits here and there which reminded one of Devonshire, where the luxuriant ferns dipped their waving plumes into the cool waters of the rocky stream. In the forest, too, there were exquisite fairy-spots, where, as Spenser says, is found "beauty enregistered in every nook."

After a time the way grew more wild in the character of the scenery, and at length the route we took was so rough that we had to dismount and lead our horses up the side of a steep hill. It was tiresome work, for the heat was intense; but gaining the top, we were rewarded by a grand view of the Balkan Mountains rising directly south. We ought to have made out Widdin and a stretch of the Danube at Palanka; but the middle of the day is the worst time for the details of a distant view.

Shortly after this we arrived at a small uncivilised-looking village. The men were powerfully built in point of figure, and the women rather handsome. Both sexes wear picturesque garments. This village, like many others of the same kind, we found encircled by plum-orchards. Thousands of barrels of dried plums are sent from Servia every year, not only to Western Europe, but to America. Besides the consumption of the fruit in its innocent form of prunes, it is made into the spirit called *slivovitz*, the curse of Hungary and Roumania.

We made a halt at this village, and sent out a man to look up some horses. He brought in several, but none of them were strong enough for my purpose. It was then proposed that we should ride on to the next village. Here we got dinner but no horses. The meal was very simple but not unpalatable, finishing up with excellent Turkish coffee.

I am writing now of the *status quo ante bellum*, and I must say I was struck with the well-to-do aspect of the peasants in Servia. By peasants I mean the class answering to the German *bauer*. It is true they lack many things that Western civilisation regards as necessaries; but have they not had the Turks for their masters far into this century? Turning over Lady Mary Wortley

Montague's Letters,[1] there occurs the following paragraph in her account of a journey through Servia in 1717:—

"We crossed the deserts of Servia, almost quite overgrown with wood, through a country naturally fertile. The inhabitants are industrious; but the oppression of the peasants is so great, they are forced to abandon their houses, and neglect their tillage, all they have being a prey to janissaries whenever they please to seize upon it. We had a guard of five hundred of them, and I was almost in fears every day to see their insolencies in the poor villages through which we passed. . . . I was assured that the quantity of wine last vintage was so prodigious that they were forced to dig holes in the earth to put it in. The happiness of this plenty is scarcely perceived by the oppressed people. I saw here [Nissa] a new occasion for my compassion. The wretches that had provided twenty waggons for our baggage from Belgrade hither for a certain hire being all sent back without payment, some of their horses lamed, and others killed, without any satisfaction made for them. The poor fellows came round the house weeping and tearing their hair and beards in a most pitiable manner, without getting anything but drubs from the insolent soldiers. I

[1] Letters and Works, edited by Lord Wharncliffe, 1837, p. 351, 359.

would have paid them the money out of my own pocket with all my heart, but it would only have been giving so much to the aga, who would have taken it from them without any remorse. . . . The villagers are so poor that only force would extort from them necessary provisions. Indeed the janissaries had no mercy on their poverty, killing all the poultry and sheep they could find, without asking to whom they belonged, while the wretched owners durst not put in their claim for fear of being beaten. When the pashas travel it is yet worse. These oppressors are not content with eating all that is to be eaten belonging to the peasants; after they have crammed themselves and their numerous retinue, they have the impudence to exact what they call *teeth-money*, a contribution for the use of their teeth, worn with doing them the honour of devouring their meat."

This is a lively picture of Turkish rule a century and a half ago; it helps us to understand the saying, "Where the Turk treads, no grass grows."

The insurrection in Bulgaria had just broken out when I was in Servia: I cannot say I heard it much talked of; we, none of us, knew then the significance of the movement. But great uneasiness was felt in reference to the wide spread of certain communistic doctrines. A disturbance was stated

to have taken place a few days before at Negotin. The foreign owners of property expressed themselves very seriously alarmed about the communistic propagandists who were going round the country. No one seemed certain as to the course events would take.

However—to resume my own simple narrative—after dining in the little village aforesaid, we set our faces again towards Maidenpek, returning by another route, which afforded us some very romantic scenery. I finished the difficulty about the horse by purchasing the one I had ridden that day. He was smaller than I liked, but he had proved himself strong and sure footed. I cannot say he was a beauty, but what can one expect for seventeen ducats — about eight pounds English?

The second day of our stay at Maidenpek was principally devoted to inspecting some copper mines belonging to an English company. They appeared to be doing pretty well. We next arranged to ride over to Kucainia, a place some twenty-five miles off. It was settled that we were to start at seven o'clock in the morning, but a dense white fog obliterated the outer world—we might have been on the verge of Nowhere. It was more than two hours before the fog lifted sufficiently to enable us

to proceed. We went on our way some three miles when a drenching shower came on, and we took shelter in the cavernous interior of an enormous, half-ruined oak-tree. Natural decay and the pickaxes of the woodman seeking fuel for his camp-fire had hollowed out a comfortable retreat from the storm. Surrounding the tree was a bed of wild strawberries, which helped to beguile the time. When at length the clouds cleared away, we resumed our saddles with dry jackets. But, as it turned out, the half-hour we spent under the tree lost us the chance of some fun.

I must remark that our road lay the whole way through a majestic forest. We were actually on the highroad to Belgrade, yet in many places it was nothing more than a grass-drive with trees on either side. Looking some way ahead when we found ourselves on a track of this kind, we observed in the distance two men on horseback standing their horses in the middle of the road, apparently waiting for some one to pass. One of the fellows, armed with the usual long Turkish gun, seeing our approach, came forward as if to meet us. We instinctively looked to our revolvers, but as he came up we saw that the stranger on the black horse (he must have been *once* a splendid roadster) had no sinister intentions upon us. It turned out

that he was the pope from a neighbouring village. He was in a great state of excitement, but shook hands with us all round before uttering a word. He then told us that the diligence from Belgrade had been stopped only half an hour ago by five brigands at the bottom of the very hill we had just passed. The booty was by no means insignificant. The robbers had made off with 7000 florins in gold; but what seemed rather significant was the statement that though the driver and the conductor of the diligence were both well armed, they had offered but little or no resistance. They declared they were overpowered by numbers. If there had been a shot fired we certainly must have heard it.

Later we ascertained that the money belonged to the copper-mining company at Maidenpek; the loss was not theirs, however, as the Government would have to reimburse it. It was just like our ill-luck to wait out of the shower; but for that delay we should have come in for the affray. I have my doubts as to whether our assistance would have been particularly welcome to the driver of the diligence. Robbery on the highroad is a capital offence in Servia.[1]

Arriving at the next village, we found the whole place in a hubbub and commotion. The men were

[1] The robbers were subsequently taken and executed.

arming and collecting horses. We went straight to the post-office to hear the rights of the story; the facts were mainly as I have related them. The excitement appeared to increase as the crowd flocked in from the fields. Horses were being saddled, powder served out, and arrangements made for a systematic battue of the robbers. After amusing ourselves by watching the warlike preparations, we rode on to Kucainia.

We were hospitably received by a fellow-countryman who is working the mines there. We did justice to his capital dinner, and told our robber story, which our host capped with the rumours of a communistic rising down south.

After a short stay at Kucainia, we made arrangements for returning over the Danube; but this time we proposed to strike the river at Belo-breska, higher up than Milanovacz. We had dropped our other friend, so H—— and I hired a light cart for the thirty miles to Belo-breska, my new horse meanwhile being tied on behind, and so we jogged along. The road was good, but, like the good people in Thackeray's novels, totally uninteresting. We drove continually through fields of maize—I say *through* the fields, for there was no hedge or fence anywhere. The soil appeared to be splendidly fertile and well cultivated.

Arrived at Belo-breska, our object was to get across the Danube, and luckily we found a large flat-bottomed boat used for cattle. The owner demanded a ducat (about nine shillings) for taking us across. I thought it a monstrous charge, but the fellow had us in his power. I do not think the Servians are much liked by those who have to do business with them. From all I heard, Canning's lines about the sharp practice of some nearer neighbours would apply very well to the Servians :—

> " In matters of commerce the fault of the Dutch
> Is giving too little, and asking too much."

No sooner had we landed on the Hungarian side of the river than up came a customhouse official, who informed me that I must pay duty for my horse. Of course, as a law-respecting Briton, I was ready enough to comply; but the fellow could not tell me what the charge was, saying his chief was absent, and might not be back for some hours.

This was exasperating to the last degree; the more so that it seemed so stupid that the man left in charge could not consult a tariff of taxes, or elicit from the villagers some information. He was stolidly obstinate, and refused to let my horse go at any price, though I offered him what H—— and I both thought a reasonable number of florins for the horse-duty. In less than ten minutes I had

worked myself into a rage—a foolish thing to do with the thermometer at 96° in the shade; but H—— was provokingly calm, which irritated me still more. There is an old French verse which, rendered into English, says—

> "Some of your griefs you have cured,
> And the sharpest you still have survived;
> But what torments of pain you endured
> From evils that never arrived!"

Now, a little patience would have saved me a useless ebullition of temper. While I was still at white-heat up came the head official; removing the cigar from his lips with Oriental dignity and deliberation, he calmly answered my question, and having paid the money we went our way.

Our design was now to get to Weisskirchen, and sleep there, that place being the only decent quarters within reach. Our road was over the mountains—a lonely pass of ill repute. Several persons had been stopped and robbed in these parts quite recently. The Government had formerly a small guardhouse at the top of the pass; but it has been deserted since 1867, when the district ceased to be maintained as the Military Frontier. Since that time crime has been very much on the increase all along the border-country. The lawlessness that is rampant at the extremities of the kingdom shows a weakness in the Central Government which is very reprehensible.

But for this laxity on the borders, the recent Szeckler conspiracy for making a raid on the Russian railway could never have been projected.

We arrived all right at Weisskirchen, which was good-luck considering the chances of an upset in the darkness, for night had overtaken us long before our drive was half over. Thoroughly tired, we were glad enough to draw up in the innyard, the same I had visited some weeks before; but great was our disgust at being told that there was not a bed to be had—every room was taken. We drove on to inn No. 2, where they had beds but no supper. We were nearly starving, for we had had nothing to eat since the morning, so back we had to go to No. 1 to procure supper. When this important meal was finished, we had to make the return journey once more. The streets were perfectly dark, and it was an affair of no small difficulty to find our way. It happened to me that I stepped into something soft and bumpy. I could not conceive what it was. I made a long step forward, thinking to clear the obstacle, but I only stumbled into another soft and bumpy thing. Was it a flock of sheep lying packed together? The skins of the sheep were there, it is true, but as covering for the forms of prostrate Wallacks. A lot of these fellows, wrapped in their cloaks, were sleeping huddled

together at the side of the street. I found afterwards that this is a common practice with these people. The wonderful *bunda* is a cloak by day and a house by night.

CHAPTER IV.

Variety of races in Hungary—Wallacks or Roumains—Statistics—Savage outbreak of the Wallacks in former years—Panslavic ideas—Roumanians and their origin—Priests of the Greek Church — Destruction of forests — Spirit of Communism — Incendiary fires.

THE mixture of races in Hungary is a puzzle to any outsider. There is the original substratum of Slavs, overlaid by Szeklers, Magyars, German immigrants, Wallacks, Rusniacks, Jews, and gipsies. An old German writer has quaintly described the characteristics of these various peoples in the following manner :—

"To the great national kitchen the Magyar contributes bread, meat, and wine; the Rusniack and Wallack, salt from the salt pits of Marmaros; the Slavonian, bacon, for Slavonia furnishes the greatest number of fattened pigs; the German gives potatoes and vegetables; the Italian, rice; the Slovack, milk, cheese, and butter, besides table-linen, kitchen utensils, and crockery ware; the Jew supplies the Hungarian with money; and the gipsy furnishes the entertainment with music."

Coming to hard facts, the latest statistics of M. Keleti give 15,417,327 as the total population of Hungary. Of these 2,470,000 are Wallacks, who since the nationality fever has set in desire to be called Roumains; and if you say Roman at once, they will be still better pleased. They were in old time the overflow of Wallachia, now forming part of the Roumanian Principality. The first historical irruption of the Wallacks was about the end of the fourteenth century, when they became a terrible pest to the German settlers in Transylvania, dreaded by them as much as Turk or Tartar. They burned and pillaged the lands and villages of the peaceful dwellers in the Saxon settlement; but at length they had become so numerous that the law took cognisance of their existence and reduced them to a state of serfdom, from which they were not relieved till 1848.

A subject race has always its wrongs, and there is no doubt the haughty Magyar nobles treated the Wallacks with great harshness and indignity. It was the old story—good masters were kind to their serfs, but those less fortunate had a bad time of it, what with forced labour and other burdens. "A lord is a lord even in hell" is the saying of the peasants.

Mr Paget[1] tells the story of an old countess he

[1] Hungary and Transylvania, 1839.

met in Transylvania, who used to lament that "times were sadly changed, peasants were no longer so respectful as they used to be; she could remember walking to church on the backs of the peasants, who knelt down in the mud to allow her to pass over them without soiling her shoes. She could also remember, though less partial to the recollection, a rising of the peasantry, when nothing but the kindness with which her mother had generally treated them saved her from the cruel death which many of her neighbours met with."

The rising here mentioned took place in 1784, when two Wallacks named Hora and Kloska were the leaders of a terrible onslaught upon the Magyar nobles. The Vienna Government was accused on this occasion of being very tardy in sending troops to quell the insurrection. It was the time when the unpopular reforms of Joseph II. were so ill received by the Magyars, and no good feeling subsisted between Hungary and the Central Government.

But the most frightful outbreak of the Wallacks was, as we all know, within living memory. You can hear from the lips of witnesses descriptions of horrors committed not thirty years ago in Transylvania. Entire villages were destroyed, whole families slaughtered, down to the new-born infant.

The arms of the Wallacks were supplied by Austria, for whom they were acting as a sort of militia at the time of Hungary's war of independence. The Vienna Government has been very fond of playing off the Wallacks and the Slavs against the Magyars: they have kept the pot always simmering; if some fine day it boils over, they will have the fat in the fire.

Of course in Southern Hungary one hears enough about the Panslavic movement, and Panslavic ideas. "The idea of Panslavism had a purely literary origin," observes Sir Gardiner Wilkinson in his book on Dalmatia. "It was started by Kolla, a Protestant clergyman of the Slavonic congregation at Pesth, who wished to establish a national literature by circulating all works written in the various Slavonic dialects. . . . . The idea of an intellectual union of all these nations naturally led to that of a political one; and the Slavonians seeing that their numbers amounted to about one-third of the whole population of Europe, and occupied more than half its territory, began to be sensible that they might claim for themselves a position to which they had not hitherto aspired."

But the Wallacks, or, as we will now call them, Roumains, are not Slavs at all; they are utterly distinct in race, though they are co-religionists with

the Southern Slavs. "The Roumanians," says Mr Freeman,[1] "speak neither Greek nor Turkish, neither Slave nor Skipetar, but a dialect of Latin, a tongue akin not to any of their neighbours, but to the tongues of Gaul, Italy, and Spain." He is inclined to think these so-called Dacians are the surviving representatives of the great Thracian race.

Who they were is, after all, not so important a question as what they are, these two millions and a half of Roumains in Hungary. To put the statistical figures in another way, Mr. Boner,[2] writing in 1865, calculates that the Roumains, naturalised in Southern Hungary, number 596 out of every 1000 souls in Transylvania. The fecundity of the race is remarkable, they threaten to overwhelm the Saxons, whose numbers, on the other hand, are seriously on the decrease. They are also supplanting the Magyars in *Southern* Hungary.

I have myself seen villages which I was told had been exclusively Magyar, but which are now as exclusively Roumain. It is even possible to find churches where the service conducted in the Magyar tongue has ceased to be understood by the congregation.

[1] 'Geographical Aspect of the Eastern Question,' Fortnightly Review, January 1877.

[2] Transylvania: its Products and People.

To meet a Roumain possessed even of the first rudiments of education is an exception to the rule: even their priests are deplorably ignorant; but when we find them in receipt of such a miserable stipend as 100 florins, indeed in some cases 30 florins a-year, it speaks for itself that they belong to the poorest class. The Wallacks lead their lives outside the pale of civilisation; they are without the wants and desires of a settled life. Very naturally the manumission of the serfs in 1848 found them utterly unprepared for their political freedom. Neither by nature or by tradition are they law-respecting; in fact, they are very much the reverse.

The Roumain is a Communist pure and simple; the uneducated among them know no other political creed. It is not that of the advanced school of Communism, which deals with social theories, but a simple consistent belief that, as they themselves express it, "what God makes grow belongs to one and all alike." In this spirit he helps himself to the fruit in his neighbour's garden when too lazy to cultivate the ground for himself.

This child of nature is by instinct a nomadic shepherd and herdsman; he hates forests, and will ruthlessly burn down the finest trees to make a clearing for sheep-pastures. It is impossible to travel twenty miles in the Southern Carpathians

without encountering the terrible ravages committed by these people in the beautiful woods that adorn the sides of the mountains.

"The Wallacks find it too much trouble to fell the trees," says Mr Boner. "They destroy systematically: one year the bark is stripped off, the wood dries, and the year after it is fired. . . . In 1862, near Toplitza, 23,000 *joch* of forest were burned by the peasantry."

Judging from what I saw during my travels in Hungary in 1875-76, I should say the evil described by Mr Boner ten years before has in no way abated. The Wallacks pursue their ruthless destruction of the forests, and the law seems powerless to arrest the mischief. At present there is wood and enough, but the time will come when the country at large must suffer from this reckless waste. There are about twenty-three million acres of forest in Hungary, including almost the only oak-woods left in Europe. The great proportion of the forest-land belongs to the State, hence the supervision is less keen, and the depredations more readily winked at. Riding one day with a Hungarian friend, I asked what would be the probable cost of a wooden house then building on the verge of the forest. My friend replied, laughing, "That depends on whether the builder stole the wood himself, or only bought

it of some one else who had stolen it; he might possibly have purchased the wood from the real owner, but that is not very probable. So you see I really cannot tell you what the house will cost."

Incendiary fires are very common in Hungary. Here, again, the Wallacks do their share of mischief. If they have a grudge against an active magistrate or a thriving neighbour, his farmstead is set on fire, not once, but many times probably. Added to this, the Wallack takes an actual pleasure in wanton destruction. As an instance, an English company who are working coal mines in the neighbourhood of Orsova have been obliged within the last two years to relay their railway from the mines to the Danube no less than three times, in consequence of the Wallacks persistently destroying the permanent way and stealing the rails.

Notwithstanding all this the Wallacks are not without their good points. They become capital workmen under certain circumstances, and they possess an amount of natural intelligence which promises better things as the result of education. "Barring his weakness for tobacco and spirits, the much-abused Wallack is a useful fellow to the sportsman and the traveller," said a sporting friend of mine who visits Transylvania nearly every autumn.

CHAPTER V.

Paraffine-works in Oravicza—Gold mine—Coal mines at Auima-Steirdorf—Geology—States Railway Company's mines—Bribery.

THE old copper and silver mines of Oravicza are now abandoned, but the industrial activity of the place is kept up by the working of coal mines, which have their depôt here. The States Railway Company are the great owners of mines in this district. They confine their attention to iron and coal. There are extensive paraffine-works in Oravicza; the crude oil is distilled from the black shale of the Steirdorf coal, yielding five per cent of petroleum. At Moldova, where we were recently, the same company have large sulphuric acid works, employing as material the iron pyrites of the old mines. Moldova had formerly the reputation of producing the best copper in Europe, but the mines fell out of work, I believe, in 1848.

An English gentleman is working a gold mine near Oravicza with some success. Subsequent to my visit his people came upon what I think the

miners call a "pocket" of free gold. Bismuth is also raised, though not in large quantities.

Wishing to see the coal mines at Steirdorf, I rode over the hills in about four hours. As I left Oravicza in the early morning the view appeared very striking. Looking back, I could see the little town straggling along in the shadow of the deeply-cleft valley, while beyond stretched the sunlit plain, level as a sea, rich with fields of ripe corn. The mists still lingered around me in the mountains, rolling about in the form of soft white masses of vapour, with here and there a fringed edge of iridescence. The cool freshness of the morning and the beauty of the varied scenery made the ride most enjoyable.

Arriving at Steirdorf, I spent some hours in visiting the ironworks, blast-furnaces, coke-ovens, &c. The coal produced here is said to be the best in Hungary. The output, I am told, is 150,000 tons; but only one-third of this is sold, the rest being used by the States Railway Company for their own ironworks, and for the locomotive engines of their line.

Professor Ansted,[1] who made a professional visit to this part of the country in 1862, remarks that "the iron is mined by horizontal drifts or kennels into the side of the hills. The coal is mined by vertical

[1] A Short Trip in Hungary and Transylvania.



shafts. The ironstone is of the kind common to some parts of Scotland, and known as blackband. There are as many as eight principal seams."

I had sent a man in advance from Oravicza to take my horse back, as I intended returning by rail. This mountain railway between Oravicza and Auima-Steirdorf is a remarkable piece of engineering work. In a distance of about twenty miles it ascends 1100 feet, in some parts as much as one foot in five. They have very powerful engines and a cogwheel arrangement, the line making a zigzag up the mountain-side. The effect is very curious in descending to see another train below you creeping uphill, now at one angle, now at another.

Considering the expensive nature of the works, and the paucity of passengers, I almost wonder that the States Railway Company did more than construct a narrow gauge for the mineral traffic. This company, I believe, is of Austrian origin, assisted by French capital—in fact, its head office is in Paris. It obtained large concessions in the Banat during the Austrian rule in Hungary, acquiring a considerable amount of property at very much below its real value; in consequence the company is looked upon with some degree of jealousy by the Hungarians. Of forest-land alone it owns about 360 square miles. It has a large staff of

officials, mostly Germans, who manage the woods and forests on a very complicated system, which pays well, but would probably pay better if simplified. It has also a monopoly of certain things in its own district, such as salt, &c.

The prevalence of bribery is one of the causes seriously retarding progress in Hungary. There is as yet no wholesome feeling against this corruption, even amongst those who ought to show an example to the community. They have also a droll way of cooking accounts down in these parts, but there is a vast deal of human nature everywhere, so "let no more be said."

CHAPTER VI.

Mineral wealth of the Banat—Wild ride to Dognacska—Equipment for a riding tour—An afternoon nap and its consequences—Copper mines — Self-help — Rare insects — Moravicza — Rare minerals—Deutsch Bogsan—Reschitza.

THE neighbourhood of Oravicza is well worth exploring, especially by those who like knocking about with a geological hammer. The mines in the Banat were perhaps worked earlier than any other in this part of Europe. The minerals of the district present a very remarkable variety. Von Cotta, I imagine, is the best authority upon the Banat ore deposits.

I had heard a good deal of the silver and copper mines of Dognacska, and wishing to visit them, I induced my friend H—— to accompany me. We arranged to go on horseback. I was very glad to escape the "carts of the country," which, notwithstanding the atrocious roads, are the usual mode of conveyance. It had always been my intention to ride about the country, and with this view I brought my saddle and travelling apparatus from London—

English-made articles bear knocking about so much better than similar things purchased on the Continent.

I had an ordinary pigskin saddle, furnished with plenty of metal rings. I had four saddle-bags in all, made of a material known as waterproof flax cloth. It has some advantages over leather, but is too apt to wear into holes. It is of importance to have the straps of your saddle-bags very strongly attached. It is not enough that they are sewn an inch into the bag, they should extend down the sides; for want of this I had to repair mine several times. Attached to my bridle I had a very convenient arrangement for picketing my horse. It consisted of a rope about twelve feet long, neatly rolled round itself; this was kept strapped on the left side of the horse's head.

The chief pride of my outfit was a cooking-apparatus, the last thing out, which merits a few words of description. It consisted of a round tin box, eight inches in diameter, capable of boiling three pints of water in two minutes and a half; of its own self-consciousness, the sauce-pan could evolve into a frying-pan, besides other adaptations, including space for a Russian lamp—a vessel holding spirit—with cellular cavities for salt, pepper, matches, not forgetting cup, spoon, and plate. The Russian

lamp is a very useful contrivance, in case of open-air cooking; it gives a flame six or seven inches long, which is not easily affected by wind or draught.

Amongst the stores I took out from England was some "compressed tea," which is very portable. In riding, all powdery substances should be avoided; I had on one occasion practical experience of this. I had procured some horse-medicine, and giving my animal one dose, I packed the rest very carefully, as I thought; on opening my saddle-bag after a ride of twenty miles, I found, to my disgust, that this wretched white powder had mixed itself up with everything. I wished I had made the horse his own medicine-chest, and given him his three doses at once.

Let the weather be ever so warm in Hungary, it is not wise to take even a day's ride without a good warm plaid; the changes of temperature are often very sudden, and herein is the danger of fever. The peasant says, "In summer take thy *bunda* (fur cloak)."

To complete the catalogue of my travelling appendages, I may mention a revolver, a bowie-knife, a compass, good maps of the country, and a flask. My flask held exactly a bottle of wine; it was covered with thick felt, which on being soaked

in water has the effect of keeping the wine quite cool for an incredibly long time, even in the hottest weather. I have been told that the Arabs in the desert have long been up to this dodge with respect to their water-bottles, which are suffered to leak a little to keep up the evaporation. The food I carried was of course renewed from time to time, according to circumstances. Naturally I economised the lamp spirit whenever I could obtain sticks for boiling the water, as the spirit could not always be procured in the Hungarian villages.

In starting for Dognacska and Reschitza, we had before us a ride of more than thirty miles through a very rough country, and with uncertain prospects of accommodation, so I took with me all my travelling "contraptions," as they say in the west of England. The weather was excessively hot the morning H—— and I started on our expedition. About noon, after we had ridden some two hours, the sun's rays beat down upon us with such force that we made an unintentional halt on coming to a well by the wayside. It was one of those picturesque wells so familiar in Eastern landscape—a beam balanced on a lofty pole, with a rod hanging from one end, to which is attached the bucket for drawing water.



Not far from the well was one of those curious tree hay-stacks to be seen in some parts of Hungary. It is the practice to clear away a certain number of the middle branches of a tree, then a wooden platform is constructed, on which a quantity of hay is placed in store for winter use. This mushroom-shaped hay-rick receives a cover of thatch, out of the centre of which comes the tree-top.

The shade afforded by this wigwam on stilts looked most inviting just then, and we yielded to the seduction. We got off, and throwing ourselves at full length on the grass, allowed our horses to graze close to us, without taking the trouble to picket them.

The heat of the noonday was perfectly overpowering. The momentary shade was an intense relief, for we had been in the unmitigated glare of the sun the whole morning. Of course we quickly had out our cigar-cases, and puffing the grateful weed, we were soon in full enjoyment of dignified ease. We were in that idle mood when, one says with the lotus-eaters, "taking no care"—

> "There is no joy but calm!
> Why should we only *toil*, the roof and crown of things."

"Why, indeed, should we toil?" I repeated languidly, at the same time gently and slowly breaking off the end of my cigar-ash.

"Why, indeed?" echoed my friend in a sleepy tone; and, unlike his usual wont, he was quite disinclined to argue the point, being too lazy for anything.

In another moment we had both sprung to our feet, most thoroughly roused from our apathy; the fact was, a big brute of a sheep-dog suddenly jumped in upon us, barking loud and fiercely. We very soon found means to rid ourselves of the dog, but that was the least part of the incident. It appeared that the noise and suddenness of the outburst had so frightened our horses that they took to their heels and galloped off as hard as they could tear. Of course we were after them like a shot, but they had gone all manner of ways. I spotted my little Servian nag breasting the hill to our right in grand style; the saddle-bags were beating his flanks. A pretty race we had after those brutes of horses! We had to jump ditches, and struggle up sandbanks, tear through undercover, and finally H—— got "stogged" in a treacherous green marsh. Was there ever anything so exasperating and ridiculous?

After running more or less for three-quarters of an hour in a sweltering heat, we came upon the horses in an open glade in the wood, where they were calmly regaling in green pastures, like lotus-



eaters themselves. Never from that day forward have I forgotten the necessary duty of picketing my horse.

It was well on in the afternoon before we got to Dognacska, a mere mining village, but prettily situated in a narrow valley. On approaching, we found it to be a more uncivilised place than we had expected, and we had not expected much. The children ran away screaming at the sight of two horsemen, so travellers, I expect, are unknown in these parts. We found out a little inn, indicated by a wisp of straw hanging above the door, and here we asked to be accommodated; they were profuse in promises, but as there was no one to look after the horses, we had to attend to them ourselves. The woman of the house said the men were all out, but would be back presently. We only took a little bread and cheese, but ordered a substantial supper to be ready for us on our return later in the evening. The fact was, we were in a hurry to be off to look at the works. Lead, silver, iron, and copper are found at Dognacska, but the working at present is a dead-alive operation. The blast-furnaces for making pig-iron are of recent construction, but the smelting-furnaces were very antiquated.

It was the same answer everywhere, "All belongs to the Marquis of Carrabas;" in other words, the

States Railway Company owns both mines and forests in all directions throughout the Banat, though at the same time I was told that they do not undertake metallic mining.

From what I gathered it would seem that the mines round here are not really very rich. You cannot depend on the working as in Cornwall, for they are without regular lodes. A rich "pocket" occurs here and there, but then is lost, the deposit not holding on to any depth.

We made a considerable round, and returned with appetites very sharp set, and counted on the chicken with *paprika* that we had ordered to be ready for us. On arriving at the little inn, great was our disgust to find it utterly silent and deserted; neither man, woman, nor child was to be found in or about the place. With some difficulty we caught some children, who were peering at us behind the wall of a neighbour's house, and from these blubbering little animals, who I believe thought we were going to make mince meat of them, we at length extracted the fact that the people of the inn were gone off haymaking. This was really too bad, for if they had only told us, we could have made our arrangements accordingly, but here we were starving and not the remotest prospect of supper. There was no use wasting unparliamentary

language, so I began foraging in all directions, while H—— busied himself in cutting up wood to make a fire, a process not too easy with an uncommonly blunt axe. My researches into the interior of the dwelling were not encouraging; the fowl was not there, neither was the *paprika*. At length I discovered some eggs and a chunk of stale bread stowed away in a corner; there were a great many things in that corner, but "they were not of my search"—ignorance is bliss.

H—— had done his duty by the fire; he had even persuaded the water to boil, which I looked upon as the beginning of soup. Happily for us I had my co-operative stores with me. From the depths of one of my saddle-bags I drew out a small jar of Liebig's meat—a spoonful or two of this gave quality to the soup. I added ten eggs and some small squares of bread, flavouring the whole mess with a pinch of dried herbs, salt, and pepper—all from "the stores." The result was a capital compound: in fact I never tasted a better soup of its kind; we enjoyed it immensely. We had barely finished when in came the woman of the house; she looked very much surprised, grumbled at our making such a large fire, and made no apology for her absence.

No one came in to clean and feed our horses, and

though I offered a liberal *trinkgeld* to any man or boy who would attend to them, not a soul could I get, they all slunk away. I believe they are afraid of horses at Dognacska. Self-help was the order of the day, and we just had to look after the poor brutes ourselves.

We slept in the inn. My bed was made up in the place where I had found the eggs and bread. I imagine it was the "guest-corner." I do not wish to be sensational, and I am no entomologist, therefore I will not narrate my experiences that night; but I thought of the Irishman who said, "if the fleas had all been of one mind, they could have pulled him out of bed." Fortunately the summer nights are short; we were up with the early birds, and started before the heat of the day for Moravicza, another mining village.

It was a pretty ride. We went for some way alongside a mineral tramway, which followed the bend of a charming valley. Then we came upon a new piece of road, made entirely of the whitest marble; it looked almost like snow. Afterwards our track lay through a dense forest of majestic trees. We could not have found our way unassisted, but one of the mine inspectors from Dognacska had been sent with us. It was a delicious ride, the air still cool and fresh. Sometimes we were in the forest, and

later, skirting a rocky ravine, we followed for a while a mountain stream. It was rough work for the horses, and once, when leading my horse over a narrow foot-bridge, he slipped off and rolled right over in the bed of the stream. Luckily he was none the worse for the accident: these small Servian horses bear a great deal of knocking about. It was surprising that the baggage did not suffer, but except getting a little wet, there was no harm done.

This district is famous, I believe, for several kinds of rare beetles and butterflies. I saw some beautiful butterflies myself during our ride.

Before reaching Moravicza we passed some large iron mines, but they were not in full swing. In the last century the copper mines of this district yielded extraordinary returns. Baron Born, in his "Travels in the Banat," mentions a deposit of copper ore reaching to the amazing depth of 240 feet. Some very fine syenite occurs in large blocks close to Moravicza, which might be very valuable if made more accessible. The village is half hidden in a narrow valley. Here we were most hospitably received by Herr W——. In his collection of minerals he has many rare specimens from this locality, which is peculiarly rich in regard to variety. This gentleman kindly gave me some good specimens of magnetite, greenockite (sulphate of

cadmium), aurichalcite, Ludwigite, and garnet. Leaving Moravicza, we rode on to Deutsch Bogsan, then to Reschitza, where we arrived in the evening. Here we found a tolerable inn, for it is a place of some size. We remained two days here; it is a flourishing little place, the centre of the States Railway Works. They make a large quantity of steel rails, any number of which will be wanted if half of the projected lines are carried out, which are only waiting the settlement of the Eastern Question.

In Reschitza there are large blast-furnaces and Bessemer converters. Enormous quantities of charcoal are produced; in short, on all sides there is evidence of mining activity. Narrow-gauge lines run in every direction, serving the coal mines; there is besides a railway for the public from Reschitza to Deutsch Bogsan, and from the latter place a branch communicates with the main line between Buda-Pest and Basiash.

The country round Reschitza is rather pretty, but more tame than what we had seen in other parts. We returned to Oravicza by a shorter route, riding the whole distance in one day, which we did easily, for the roads were not so bad, and it was not much over thirty miles. In Hungary it is frequently more a question of roads than of actual distance.

CHAPTER VII.

Election at Oravicza — Officialism — Reforms — Society — Ride to Szaszka — Fine views — Drenkova — Character of the Serbs — Svenica—Rough night walk through the forest.

We got back to Oravicza just in time to witness an election, which had been a good deal talked about as likely to result in a row. There were two candidates in the field : one a representative of the Wallachian party ; the other a director of the States Railway Company. In consequence of a serious disturbance which took place some years ago, the elections are now always held outside the town. The voting was in a warehouse adjoining the railway station. A detachment of troops was there to keep order, in fact the two parties were divided from each other by a line of soldiers with fixed bayonets. It was extremely ridiculous. The whole affair was as tame as possible ; no more show of fighting than at a Quakers' meeting. Of course the States Railway representative had it all his own way, the officials, whose name is legion, voting for him to a man. A trainful of Wallacks



arrived from some distant place, but their ardour for their own candidate was drowned in the unlimited beer provided for them by their opponents.

From what I heard about politics, or rather about the Parliament, it seems to me that their House of Commons, like our own, suffers from too many talkers. The Hungarian is at all times a great talker, and when politics open the sluices of his mind, his speech is a perfect avalanche of words. His conversation is never of that kind that puts you in a state of antagonism, as a North German has so eminently the power of doing; on the contrary, the listener sympathises whether he will or no, but on calmer reflection one's judgment is apt to veer round again.

The members of the House of Commons number 441, and of these 39 are Croats, who are allowed to use their own language by special privilege. The members are paid five florins a-day when the House is sitting, and a grant of four hundred florins a-year is made for lodgings. There is this peculiarity about the Hungarian Parliament: hereditary members of the Upper House can if they choose offer themselves for election in the Lower House. Many of the hereditary peers do so, meanwhile resigning as a matter of course their seat in the Upper Chamber.

The reform of 1848 extended the franchise so far that in point of fact it only stops short of manhood suffrage. The property qualification of a voter is in some cases as low as a hundred florins yearly income. Religious and political liberty was granted to all denominations. The disabilities of the Jews were suffered to remain a few years later; but in 1867 they were entirely removed, and at the present moment several of the most active members of Parliament are of the Jewish persuasion. Elections are triennial, an arrangement not approved by many true patriots, who complain that members think more of what will be popular with the constituents, whom they must so soon meet again, than of the effect of their votes on measures that concern the larger interests of the State.

Oravicza was so seductive — with its pleasant society; its "land parties," as they call picnics; its evening dances, enlivened by gipsy music—that I remained on and on from want of moral courage to tear myself away. I had thoughts of changing my plans altogether, and of devoting myself to a serious study of the minerals of the Banat, making gay little Oravicza my head-centre. Looking back after the lapse of sober time, I doubt if science would have gained much. Well, well, I made up my mind to go. "The world was all before me," but I—left

my paradise alone. I had no fair Eve "hand in hand" to help my wandering steps.

I do think that packing one's portmanteau is the most prosaic thing in life. Shirts and coats must be folded, and one's possessions have a way of increasing which makes packing a progressive difficulty. However, at last I did persuade my portmanteau to shut, and forthwith despatched it, with some other heavy things, to Hatszeg, a small town in Transylvania, where I intended to be in the course of ten days.

I was now bound for Uibanya, in the Valea Tissovitza, a few miles from Orsova on the Danube. There is an English firm down there engaged in working the coal mines, and I had an introduction to one of the partners. I rode from Oravicza to Szaszka—the place had become quite familiar to me by this time—and I slept there. The night was not long, for I left before sunrise. It is the only way to enjoy the ride; for the middle of the day in July is really too hot for exertion in this part of the world, and I found it was best to rest during the great heat of the day. From Szaszka I pushed on to Moldova, and judging from my former experience of driving the same road, I must say I prefer the saddle infinitely. I should observe that on leaving Szaszka I got into a dense mist

on the top of the mountain. Fortunately I knew my bearings. When it cleared off I had a magnificent view all the way, reaching the Danube about nine o'clock. Here I spent the day and night at the house of Mr G——, with whom I was slightly acquainted, and who received me hospitably. The next morning very early I started for Svenica, a lovely ride along the Szechenyi road. I had been in the saddle from five to eleven A.M., and reaching Drenkova, I was not sorry to stop on account of the great heat. It has only a wretched inn, where myself and horse fared very badly. The Danube steamers are not unfrequently obliged to stop at Drenkova and reship their passengers into smaller boats. This happens when the water is low, and sometimes when the season is very dry the river has to be abandoned for the road. When the Eastern Question is settled a vast number of improvements are to be carried out on the Danube it is said. The first ought to be the deepening of the channel in this particular part of the river. There would surely be no great difficulty in removing the obstructions caused by the rocks. But there are always political difficulties creeping up in this part of the world to prevent the carrying out of useful works.

My siesta over, I was off again, soon after three P.M., on my way to Svenica. I had a splendid

view of the river, and stopped my horse more than once to watch the boatmen at their perilous work of shooting the rapids. Getting to Svenica soon after six o'clock, I made inquiries about the distance to Uibanya. No two people agreed, but the chief spokesman declared it was a couple of hours' walk, and he volunteered to show me the way. The inn was horribly dirty, as one might expect from the appearance of the village, which is inhabited entirely by Serbs, otherwise Rascians. It appears that a vast number of Slavs from Servia took refuge in Hungary at the end of the seventeenth century. Some were Roman Catholics, but they were mostly of the Greek Church. A colony settled at Buda. Lady Mary Wortley Montague, writing from that town in 1717, says that the Governor of Buda assured her that the Rascian colony without the walls would furnish him with 12,000 fighting men at any moment. They were always a card in the hands of the Austrians against the Magyars.

Leopold I. granted the Servian refugees very considerable privileges and immunities, causing thereby great jealousy among the Hungarians. Always favoured by the Government of Vienna, these people have invariably shown themselves pro-Austrian; and in 1848 they were destined to be a thorn in the side of the proud Magyars, who

despised them, and took no pains to disguise the feeling, even at a moment so singularly unpropitious as the eve of their own rupture with Austria. It seems that in the month of May in that eventful year the Rascians sent a deputation to Pesth, to the Diet, setting forth certain grievances and demanding redress. The Magyars rejected their petition with haughty contempt, "a grièvous fault," says General Klapka in his history. The result was that the Rascian deputies returned home in a state of great disgust at their reception, and immediately took up arms against the Hungarians. This was before the Government of Vienna had thrown off the mask. These facts are not without significance at the present time. The Rascians are strongly imbued with ideas of Panslavism, and now disdain any other name than that of Servians; it would be a great offence to call the humblest individual of the race by the old appellation of Rascian or Ratzen. These so-called Servian subjects of the crown of St. Stephen number about 800,000!

The subject is worth mentioning at some length, because a good deal of confusion exists respecting this particular division of the great Slav family.

Judging from what I saw of the inhabitants of Svenica, I think they have not progressed very far in the ways of civilisation. I could get nothing in

the whole place but a piece of bread; but I was not to be balked of my tea, so I entered the principal room in the wretched little inn, and proceeded to take out my cooking apparatus. I was obliged to content myself with a thick fluid, which they called water; no better was to be procured. Now it happens that my spirit-lamp, when it begins to boil up, makes a tremendous row for two or three minutes, as if it meant to burst up with a general explosion. This circumstance, and my other novel proceedings, had attracted a lot of idlers round the door, and before the tea-making was over a number of Serbs and Wallacks crowded into the room in a state of excited curiosity, and it was with difficulty that I defended my tea-machine from absolute dismemberment. Though my horse and I had done a good day's work, I determined to push on to Uibanya, for it seemed to be not much more than a two hours' walk; moreover, I had been warned of the bad reputation of the people in the village. I had heard it was not an uncommon trick with them to steal a traveller's horse in the night, and quietly ship him over the Danube into Servia. I had no fancy for losing my possessions in this way, so altogether it seemed better to go on.

When I started with the guide I had hired from Svenica, there was still a good half-hour before sun-

set. We commenced at once climbing a very steep and stony path, where I had to lead my horse; indeed at times it was very much like getting my horse over the top of a high-pitched roof, if such an exploit were possible. We shortly lost all trace of a path. I turned several times to look at the fine glimpses of the Danube far below us. Arriving at a fringe of wood, I was not a little surprised to see emerge from thence a sturdy Wallack, carrying the usual long staff, armed with an axe at one end. I say surprised, because he at once joined in with us, and though I had not seen him during our climb, I had my strong suspicions that he had followed us all the way. My guide spoke a little German, and I demanded of him in a sharp tone what the other fellow meant by joining us. My guide answered that he was afraid to return alone, for that presently we should get into "the forest, where it would be as dark as a cave," and he had asked the other man to come with us from Svenica. As according to his own account he had traversed the forest for nineteen years, I thought he might very well have gone back alone; besides, if there was any truth in what he said, why should he have made a mystery about his companion till we were some way on our journey?

We were now on the outskirts of a thick forest, the

sun had set in great beauty, but every hue of colour had now faded from "the trailing clouds of glory;" faded, indeed, so quickly that before the fact of twilight could be realised, it was already night! It was literally dark as a cave when we penetrated into the forest. My guide had a lantern, which he lighted; for it would, indeed, have been impossible to make any progress without the light. Though we were again in a path, the way was frequently barred by the trunks of fallen trees. We were still ascending, occasionally coming upon a steep rough bit, difficult for the horse on account of the loose stones. I think we must have looked very much like a party of smugglers. The ex-forester walked first, swinging his lantern as he moved; then came the Wallack volunteer, stumping along with axe-headed staff. He wanted very much to fall into the rear, but this I would not allow, and in a resolute tone ordered him forward. I followed with my little grey horse close upon the heels of my companions, keeping all the time a keen and suspicious eye upon their movements. They spoke together occasionally, but I was profoundly ignorant of what they said, not understanding a word of Wallachian.

Where it was anyhow possible we went at a good pace, but the underwood and fallen trees hindered

us a good deal. My guide told me to look out for wolves. These forests are said to be full of them in summer, and he added that a lot of pigs belonging to a neighbour of his had been carried off by the wolves only the night before. I took this opportunity of telling him that I was a dead shot, pointing to my revolver, which was handy; adding a piece of information that I made much of, namely, that I was expected at Uibanya.

The doubts I felt about the honesty of the guide and the other fellow were increased by a suspicion that they were leading me the wrong way. We had been three hours in the forest, always ascending. Now I knew that my destination was situated in a valley. I asked repeatedly when we should get there, and invariably came the same short answer, "Gleich" (directly). I noticed that we were steadily walking in the same direction, for the trees being less thick I could keep my eye on the Polar star: this was so far satisfactory. Presently I saw a light or two in the distance, and before long we came to a cottage, the first in what turned out to be the little village of Eibenthal. Here we came upon a party of miners, who gave me the pleasant information that we were still an hour's walk from Uibanya! There was nothing for it but to go on. I confess I breathed more freely in the open; we



were quite clear of the forest now. On we went, a regular tramp, tramp, through a long valley skirted with woods on either side. This last part of the walk seemed interminable. It was eighteen hours since I had started in the morning. I was physically weary, and I really believe I went off to sleep for a second or two, though my legs kept up their automatic motion. I am sure I must have slept, for I had a notion, like one has sometimes in sleep, of extraordinary extension of time. It seemed to me that for years of my life I had done nothing else than walk under the starlit sky into a vast cave of black darkness, which only receded farther and farther as the swinging of the lamp advanced with its monotonous vibration of light.

It was just midnight when I descried a faint light in the distance. It grew as we tramped on. I knew therefore it was no deceptive star setting in the horizon, but the welcome firelight of a human habitation. This time it was my goal—Uibanya! I stopped for a moment and fired off a couple of shots to announce our approach, whereupon some of the people in the house rushed out to see what was up, and I made myself known by an English "halloo," and out of the darkness came a voice saying, "All right."

"All's well that ends well," I said to myself as

I paid my guide for his night's work. I looked round for the Wallack, but the fellow had sloped off!

I was most kindly and hospitably received, and, O ye gods, with what an appetite I ate the excellent supper quickly prepared for me!



CHAPTER VIII.

Hospitable welcome at Uibanya—Excursion to the Servian side of the Danube—Ascent of the Stierberg—Bivouac in the woods—Magnificent views towards the Balkans—Fourteen eagles disturbed—Wallack dance.

A COUPLE of days after my arrival at Uibanya, my friend F—— kindly arranged a little expedition into Servia, with the object of making the ascent of the Stierberg, a mountain of respectable elevation, commanding very fine views. Our guide was the postmaster of Plavishovitza, who professed a knowledge of the country round about. We drove down to the Danube, and there crossed the river in a primitive "dug-out," and almost immediately commenced the ascent of the Stierberg. It became quite dark by the time we got half-way up the mountain; this we were prepared for, having made arrangements for camping out the night. We had brought with us an ample store of provisions, not forgetting our plaids. The heat was so great when we started that we dispensed with coats, and

even waistcoats, and went on rejoicing in the cool freedom of our shirt-sleeves. Each wore a broad leather waist-belt, stuck round with revolvers and bowie-knives. I believe we looked like a couple of the veriest brigands. Had we only been spotted by a "correspondent," I make little doubt that we should have been telegraphed as "atrocities" to the London evening papers.

The more civilisation closes round one, the more enjoyable is an occasional "try back" into barbarism. This feeling made the mere fact of camping out seem delightful. Our first care was to select a suitable spot; we found a clearing that promised well, and here we made a halt. We deposited our *batterie de cuisine*, arranged our plaids, and then proceeded to make a fire with a great lot of dried sticks and logs of wood. The fire was soon crackling and blazing away in grand style, throwing out mighty tongues of flame, which lit up the dark recesses of the forest.

Now came the supper, which consisted of robber-steak and tea. I always stuck to my tea as the most refreshing beverage after a long walk or ride. I like coffee in the morning before starting—good coffee, mind; but in the evening there is nothing like tea. The robber-steak is capital, and deserves an "honourable mention" at least: it is composed

of small bits of beef, bacon, and onion strung alternately on a piece of stick; it is seasoned with pinches of *paprika* and salt, and then roasted over the fire, the lower end of the stick being rolled backwards and forwards between your two palms as you hold it over the hot embers. It makes a delicious relish with a hunch of bread.

Our camp-fire and its surroundings formed a romantic scene. We had three Serbs with us as attendants, and there was F—— and myself, all seated in a semicircle to windward of the smoke. The boles of the majestic beech-trees surrounding us rose like stately columns to support the green canopy above our heads, and in the interstices of the leafy roof were visible spaces of sky, so deeply blue that the hue was almost lost in darkness; but out of the depths shone many a bright star in infinite brilliancy. The scene was picturesque in the highest degree. The flickering firelight, our Serbians in their quaint dresses moving about the gnarled roots and antlered branches of the trees, upon which the light played fitfully, and the mystery of that outer rim of darkness, all helped to impress the fancy with the charm of novelty.

After supper was finished, and duly cleared away, we all disposed ourselves for sleep, taking

care to have the guns ready at hand, for we might be disturbed by a wolf or a bear on his nightly rounds. Our attendants had previously collected some large logs of wood, large almost as railway-sleepers, to keep up a good fire through the night. Wrapping my plaid round me, I laid myself down, confident that I should sleep better than in the softest feather bed. I gave one more look at the romantic scene, and then turned on my side to yield to the drowsiness of honest fatigue.

But, alas! there was no sleep for me. I had hardly closed my eyes when I was attacked by a regiment of mosquitoes. I was so tormented by these brutes that I never slept a wink. I sat up the greater part of the night battling with them; and what provoked me more was the tranquillity of F——'s slumbers. I could bear it no longer, so at three A.M. I woke him up, saying it was time for us to be stirring if we wanted to get to the top of the mountain to see the sun rise. I believe he thought I need not have called him so early, and grumbled a little, which was very unreasonable, for the fellow had been sleeping for hours to my knowledge. Rousing our Serbs, we set them about making preparations for breakfast; but when the water was boiled and the tea made, it turned out to be utterly undrinkable. The water-cask had had sour wine in it, and

the water was spoiled. We consoled ourselves with the hope that we might get some sheep's milk on the mountain.

We reached the summit of the Stierberg before five o'clock; it has no great elevation, but the position commands magnificent views of all the surrounding country. Advancing to the verge of the precipice overlooking the Danube, a sheer wall of rock 2000 feet in depth, we signalled our arrival by discharging our rifles simultaneously. This "set the wild echoes flying." Each cliff and scaur of the narrow gorge flung back the ringing sound till the sharp reverberations stirred the whole defile. Before the fusillade had ceased we beheld a sight I shall never forget. The sound had disturbed a colony of eagles, who make their nests in these rocky fissures. They flew out in every direction from the face of the cliff, and went soaring round and round, evidently in much alarm at the unwonted noise. We counted fourteen of these magnificent birds. I wanted to get a shot at one, but they never came near enough. After circling round for several minutes they flew with one accord to the opposite woods, and were no more seen.

The view from the Stierberg is splendid. On every side were stretches of primeval forest. Bounding

the horizon on the north-east we made out the Transylvanian Alps; to the south lay Servia, and more distant still the Balkan Mountains. As the sun rose higher, lighting up in a marvellous way all the details of this fair landscape, we could see far eastward a strip of the Danube flashing in the sunbeams.

We turned reluctantly from the grand panorama, but we began to feel the distressing effects of thirst. We had failed to procure any sheep's milk, but the postmaster declared that when we got back to our camping-place we should be able to find some fresh water. Arrived at this pleasant spot, we rested under the beech-trees, and sent off two of the Serbs to look for water. After waiting some time one of them brought us some, but it was from a stagnant pool, alive with animalculæ, quite unfit to drink. I never remember suffering so much from thirst. The heat was excessive, but happily before reaching the Danube we found a delicious spring gushing out from the limestone rock. It was an indescribable refreshment for thirsty souls. We further regaled ourselves with a good meal at the village on the Hungarian side of the Danube, after crossing again in the "dug-out."

The pope of the village entered into conversation with us, and finding I was a stranger he ordered a



Wallack dance for our amusement. The costumes of the women were picturesque, but the dance itself was a slow affair, very unlike the lively *czardas* of the Magyar peasant.

CHAPTER IX.

A hunting expedition proposed—Drive from Uibanya to Orsova—Oriental aspect of the market-place—Cserna Valley—Hercules-Bad, Mehadia—Post-office mistakes—Drive to Karansebes—Rough customers *en route*—Lawlessness—Fair at Karansebes—Podolian cattle—Ferocious dogs.

DURING my stay at Uibanya the *Förstmeister* (head of the forest department) from Karansebes came over on business, and he told us there was to be a shooting expedition on the Alps in his district. He further invited us to take part in it, and I gladly accepted, as it fitted in very well indeed with my plans. Karansebes is directly on the route to Transylvania, whither I was bound. The district we were to shoot over is the rocky border-land between Hungary and Roumania. My friend F—— agreed to accompany me, and on our way we proposed visiting the celebrated baths of Mehadia. Early one morning we started for Orsova, a drive of thirty miles, splendid scenery all the way. The latter part of our journey was by the side of the Danube, on the Szechenyi road again.

We passed a number of hay-ricks in trees, which I have before described. Some of them were built up in the form of an inverted cone. The luxuriance of the foliage is very striking. Nothing can exceed the beauty of the wild vines so frequent on the banks of the Danube. They fall in graceful festoons from the trees; sometimes they reach across to the trees on the other side of the road, forming a complete arch of greenery. In the autumn the vine leaves turn to a glowing red, like the Virginian creeper, and then the effect of this mass of rich colouring is indeed glorious. Meanwhile gay butterflies of rare form fluttered about among the trailing vines, and bright green lizards darted in and out of the stone wall. Then an eagle or a vulture would swoop down from the heights, and settle himself on some pinnacle of rock, where he remained, motionless as a stuffed bird.

When we reached Orsova we only stopped long enough to get some dinner and take the usual siesta. This place is on the frontier; three miles farther down you pass out of Hungary into Roumanian territory. Had we stayed any time we should certainly have gone to see Trajan's bridge, about eighteen miles hence. The so-called "Iron Gates" are just below Orsova. The designation is a misnomer, for the river ceases to be pent

up between a defile, the hills recede from the shore, and the "Gates" are merely ledges of rock peculiarly difficult for navigation. Orsova is celebrated as the place where the regalia of Hungary were concealed by Kossuth and his friends from 1849 to 1853. The iron chest which held the palladium of the kingdom, the sacred crown of St Stephen, was buried in a waste spot, covered with willows, not far from the road. There is a somewhat Oriental look about Orsova. In the market-place there is a profusion of bright-coloured stuffs, prayer-carpets, and Turkish slippers. A narrow island of no great length, just below Orsova, is still held by the Turks. There is a small mosque with minarets visible amongst a group of the funeral cypress-tree, so characteristic of the presence of the Turk.

Our road to Mehadia was away from the river, following instead the lead of a lateral valley. As we drove out of Orsova we passed a lot of Wallack huts forming a kind of suburb. These huts are built of wattles stuccoed with mud, always having on one side of the dwelling a space enclosed by stockades some ten feet high; this is a necessary protection for their animals against the depredations of wolves and bears, which abound here.

Leaving this village we continued our way



through the Cserna Valley, which has few signs of cultivation beyond the orchards and vineyards that climb up the hillsides of the narrow ravine. On our left we passed a ruined aqueduct of Turkish origin, eleven arches still remaining. As we proceeded, the valley narrowed considerably, and the scenery became more wild and striking. Here vegetation is in its richest profusion; the parasitical plants are surpassingly graceful, wreathing themselves over rocks and trees.

Mehadia, or more strictly, Hercules-Bad, is the most fashionable bath in Hungary. The village of Mehedia must not be confounded with it, for it lies at a distance of six miles thence. The situation of Hercules-Bad is extremely romantic. Above the narrow rocky valley rise bare limestone peaks, girdled with rich forests of every variety of foliage. There are two kinds of springs, the sulphurous and the saline. The Hercules source bursts out from a cleft of the rock in such an immense volume that it is said to yield 5000 cubic feet in an hour. The water has to be cooled before it is used, the natural heat being as much as 131° Fahrenheit. Its efficacy is said to be so great that the patient while in the bath "feels the evil being boiled out of him"! Some of the visitors had not yet had their turn of cooking, I suppose, or if

they had been boiled, were rather underdone, for I met a good many gouty and rheumatic patients still in the hobbling condition.

The country round Mehadia is so wild, both in regard to the scenery and to the native population, that the contrast of dropping suddenly into a fashionable watering-place is very curious. This bath is much frequented for pleasure and health by the luxury-loving Roumanians, who invariably display the latest extravagance of Parisian fashion. Men in patent-leather boots devoted to cards and billiards, while in the immediate neighbourhood of glorious scenery, with bear and chamois shooting to be had for the asking, seem to me "an unknown species," as Voltaire said of the English. From what I learned of the ways of the place it seems that the Magyar and Transylvanian visitors keep quite aloof from the Roumanian coterie; they have never anything pleasant to say of one another. At Boseg, a bath in the Eastern Carpathians which I visited later, the separation is so complete that the Roumanians go at one period of the season and the Hungarian visitors at another.

It had always been my intention to stay a few days at the Hercules-Bad, and I had given the place as an address for English letters. Accordingly I presented myself at the *poste restante*. Seeing that

I was a Britisher, the postmaster gave me all the letters he possessed with English postmarks. Many of them were of considerable antiquity. Out of the goodly pile I selected some half-dozen that bore my name; but I was greatly surprised to come across one that had made a very bad shot for its destination. It bore the simple name of some poor Jack-tar, with the address "H.M.S. Hercules."

The Romans had their *établissement* here. The present name comes from the "Thermæ Herculis" of classic times. There are many interesting remains here — fragments of altars, sculptured capitals, and stones with inscriptions, all telling the same story—the story of Roman dominion and greatness.

Just then we had no time for archæology, for we wanted to push on to Karansebes, and we stayed only a day and a half at Mehadia. As it was more than we could comfortably manage to do the whole distance in a day, we arranged to drive as far as Terregova and sleep there. We left Mehadia early in the afternoon, F——'s groom riding my horse. The road was excellent—all the roads are in the districts of the Military Frontier. As an example of the quick temper of the Wallacks, I will mention a little incident which happened on the road. We met some of these people, and one

of them, who was looking another way, stumbled most awkwardly against the groom's horse, and very nearly met with an accident. Though it was so clearly his own fault, he had hardly recovered himself when, raising his axe, he was about to strike our servant on the head. Meanwhile another fellow seized a big stone, which I believe was going to make a target of the same head. Luckily I turned, and seeing the scuffle, I was out with my revolver in a moment, pointing it at the man with the axe. He understood my language, and made a hasty retreat. F—— said he had no doubt it would have gone badly with the groom if the distance between us had been greater.

We were in for adventures in a small way that evening. Just after sunset, when it was already rather dark in the valley, we found ourselves suddenly stopped by a man, who leaped out from behind a rock, seized the horses, and with a powerful grasp brought them down on their haunches. F—— had the reins, so I jumped down and made straight at the fellow, revolver in hand. I imagine he did not expect to find us armed, or he found us literally too many for him, but diving into the bushes, he was gone even quicker than he came.

We had hardly got the horses into full trot again, when we noticed two cartloads of Wallacks driving

side by side on in front of us. When we came up they would not let us pass, and continued this little game for more than ten minutes, notwithstanding all our expostulations. They were driving much slower than ourselves, and F—— began to lose patience; so holding the horses well in hand, he told me to fire off my revolver in the air. After this they thought proper to draw aside, but even then leaving us so little room that we risked our necks in passing them in a very awkward corner. I was told afterwards by the postmaster of Karansebes that a diligence had fallen over the precipice at this very place, only a very short time before, owing to the Wallack drivers purposely obstructing the road. Such are the Wallacks—I beg their pardon, Roumanians!

When we got to Terregova, we were glad to find quite a decent inn, the Wilder Mann, kept by civil people. After supper we had a chat with our hostess, who being a regular gossip, was very pleased to tell us a lot of stories about the wild character of the country-people. She was very sorry that the frontier was no longer under the Austrian military rule, for, she said, having been accustomed to the strict military system so long, the Wallacks, now they have more liberty, have become utterly lawless, and exceedingly troublesome to their German

neighbours. She added that the *gendarmes*, who were supposed to keep order in the district, were far too few to be of any real use. She complained bitterly against the Wallacks for firing the forests, and they had become much worse since '48. "In fact the time will come," she said, "when wood will be scarce, and then everybody will suffer; but they don't think, and they don't care, and just lay their hands on anything."

The Government certainly ought to look to the preservation of the forests, and above all they ought to make the law respected amongst a population which is so little advanced in civilisation as to be indifferent to the first principles of order. The Wallacks want education, and above all they want a decent priesthood, before they can make any sound progress. With all their ignorance and lawlessness, it is curious that they pride themselves on being descendants of the ancient Romans, ignoring their "Dacian sires."

The next day we went on to Karansebes—a good road and charming scenery. This is the highroad into Transylvania, called the Eisenthor Pass; but it hardly merits the name of pass, inasmuch as it only crosses the spur of the hills. The distance from Orsova on the Danube to Hatszeg in Transylvania is 110 miles: the district is known as the "Ro-

manen Banat," and, as the name imports, is principally inhabited by Wallacks, otherwise Roumanians.

We arrived at Karansebes in the afternoon, and by good-luck it chanced to be fair-day. This is a central market for a considerable extent of country, so that there is always a great gathering of people. In driving into the town we passed a long bridge which crosses a low-lying meadow, the central arch being sufficient to span the stream, at least in summer. From this elevation we had a capital view of the fair, which was being held in these meadows, and could look down leisurely on the whole scene; and a very novel and amusing sight it was.

There were hundreds of people; and what a variety of races and diversity of costumes! The Wallack women, in their holiday suits, were the most picturesque. Many of them were handsome, and they have generally a very superior air to the men; they are better dressed and more civilised looking. There were a sprinkling of Magyars in braided coats, or with white felt cloaks richly embroidered in divers colours. But the blue-eyed, fair-complexioned German was far more numerous. The Magyar element is very much in the minority in this particular part of Hungary. The Jews and the

gipsies were there in great numbers—they always are at fairs—in the quality of horse-dealers and vendors of wooden articles for the kitchen. The Jew is easily distinguished by his black corkscrew ringlets, and his brown dressing-gown coat reaching to his heels. This ancient garment suits him "down to the ground;" in fact his yellow visage and greasy hat would not easily match with anything more cleanly. These Jewish frequenters of fairs are, as a rule, of the lowest class, hailing either from the Marmaros Mountains in North-Eastern Hungary, or from Galicia.

The fair is really a very important exhibition of the products and manufactures of the country, and it is well worth the attention of the stranger, who may pass on with the motley crowd through streets of stalls and booths. One *annexe* is devoted to furniture, from a winged wardrobe down to a wooden spoon. In another part you see piles of Servian rugs, coarse carpets, sheepskin *bundas*, hairy caps of a strange peaked form, broad hats made of reed or rush, and the delightful white felt garments before mentioned, which are always embroidered with great taste and skill. Horses, cows, and pigs are also brought here in great numbers to exchange owners. The long-horned cattle are perhaps the most striking feature in the whole fair.

They are white, with a little grey on the necks, flanks, and buttocks. Oxen are much used for hauling purposes as well as for the plough. A pair of oxen, it is considered, will do the work of four horses.

Professor Wrightson says: "The Podolian is an aboriginal race, descended from the wild urox (*Bos primigenius*). The race is remarkable for its capability of resisting influences of climate, and its contentedness with poor diet. . . . The Hungarian oxen are considered by naturalists as the best living representative of the original progenitors of our domestic cattle." Of the buffalo the same writer says: "It was introduced into Hungary by Attila; it is found in the lowlands, on both sides of the Danube and the Theiss, Lower Hungary, and Transylvania. In 1870 there were upwards of 58,000 in Transylvania, and more than 14,000 in Hungary."[1]

Later in my tour, when at Klausenburg, I had an opportunity of seeing an extensive dairy where upwards of a hundred buffalo cows were kept. The farm alluded to is admirably managed, and, I am told, yields very profitable returns.

It is the opinion of Professor Wrightson that cattle are diminishing in Hungary owing to the breaking

[1] 'Report on the Agriculture of the Austro-Hungarian Empire,' Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society, vol. x. Part xi. No. xx.

up of pastures and the recurrence of rinderpest. He says he does not think that the English market can look to Hungary for a supply of cattle at present. This gentleman did not, I believe, visit Transylvania, and I am inclined to think the supply from *that* part of the kingdom is greatly on the increase; there the pastures are *not* in process of being turned into arable land, and the rise in prices has given an impetus to the profitable employment of capital in raising stock.

In walking round the fair, we took notice of the horses. I could have made a better bargain than I did in Servia. A useful cart-horse could be bought, I found, for about six or seven pounds. I daresay I could have picked out a few from the lot fit for riding, but of course they were rough animals, mere peasant horses. Some of the colts, brought in a string fresh from the mountains, were wild, untamed-looking creatures; but hardly as wild as the Wallacks who led them, dressed in sheepskin, and followed each by his savage wolf-like dog. The dogs are very formidable in Hungary. It is never safe to take a walk, even in the environs of a town, without a revolver, on account of these savage brutes, who, faithful to their masters, are liable to make the most ferocious attacks on strangers. This special kind of dog is in fact most useful—to the shepherd

on the lonely *puszta*, to the keeper of the vineyard through the night-watches, when the wild boar threatens his ravages—and in short he acts the part of rural police generally.

In Hungary, as elsewhere, there are dogs of kindly nature and gentle culture. I can record a curious instance of reasoning power in a dog named "Jockey," who is well known at Buda Pest. He has the habit of crossing over from Pest to Buda every morning of his life in one or another of the little steamboats that ply backwards and forwards. He regularly takes his walk over there, and then returns as before by steamer. This is his practice in summer; but when winter arrives, and the ice on the Danube stops the traffic of the steamboats, then Jockey has recourse to the bridge. I believe there is no doubt of this anecdote. Another instance of sagacity is attributed to him. His master lost a lawsuit through the rascality of his attorney; Jockey feels so strongly on the subject that he snarls and growls whenever a lawyer enters his master's house. Here, of course, the instinct is stronger than the powers of discrimination.

CHAPTER X.

Post-office at Karansebes—Good headquarters for a sportsman—Preparations for a week in the mountains—The party starting for the hunt—Adventures by the way—Fine trees—Game—Hut in the forest—Beauty of the scenery in the Southern Carpathians.

We put up at the Grünen Baum, the principal inn at Karansebes. My first business was to worry everybody about my guns, which I had telegraphed should be sent from Buda Pest to this place. I am afraid the postmaster will never hear the name of an Englishman without associating the idea of a fussy, irritable, impatient being, such as I was, about my guns. Of course it was very provoking that they had not arrived. This postmaster was a pattern official, an honour to his calling; he not only bore with me, but he offered to lend me a gun if mine did not come. In Germany there is a saying, "*So grob wie ein postbeamter.*" The postmaster of Karansebes was a glorious exception to the rule.

On one occasion, while I was waiting in the office for an answer to one of the many telegrams that I had

despatched, a peasant woman came in with a letter without an address. The postmaster seeing this, and thinking she could not write, asked her to whom he should address the letter. She was dreadfully indignant with him for his well-meant offer, and said, "My son knows all about it—it is no business of yours."

"But I can't forward it without an address," objected the postmaster.

"Yes, you must," she rejoined, getting more and more angry—"you must; that's what you are paid for doing."

Here some other people came to the rescue, and by dint of all talking at once for full twenty minutes, they induced her to give her son's address; but it was a clear case of "convinced against her will," for as she quitted the office she turned round and said, with a shake of the head, "It's all very well to put that; but my son will know who it is from."

Karansebes is not at all a bad place as headquarters for the sportsman. In the neighbourhood there is very good snipe-shooting in spring and autumn. The fishing too is excellent for trout and grayling. The bear, the wolf, and the chamois are to be met with on the heights, which form this portion of the great horseshoe of the Carpathians.

The day before our expedition we were occupied

with a few necessary preparations. When these matters were settled to our satisfaction, we went off in good time to secure a few hours' sleep, as we were to start at four A.M.

F—— and I were up in capital time, eager for the day's work, and anxious, moreover, not to keep the rest of the party waiting. There was an Austrian general, however, amongst the number, and therefore we might safely have slept another hour. The morning was very unpromising, the rain descended in a dull persistent downpour. We tried to hope it was the pride of the morning. The prospect was dreary enough to damp the spirits of some of our party. One man found that urgent private affairs called him hence; another averred he had an inflammatory sore throat. I expected a third would say he had married a wife and could not come. Happily, however, the weather cleared a little as the morning advanced, and further desertions were arrested.

At length the whole party got off in sundry *leiterwagen*, a vehicle which has no counterpart in England, and the literal rendering of a ladder-waggon hardly conveys the proper notion of the thing itself. This long cart, it is needless to say, is without springs; but it has the faculty of accommodating itself to the inequalities of the

road in a marvellous manner. It has, moreover, a snake-like vertebræ, and even twists itself when necessary.

My guns never came after all, and I was obliged to borrow. The one lent me had one barrel smooth-bore, the other rifled.

We drove for some distance along the Hatszeg highroad, then turned off to the right. Continuing our course for some time, we came to the pretty little village of Mörül, where we breakfasted. It was quite the cleanest and neatest Wallack settlement that I had seen at all. It is celebrated for the beauty of its women. Several very pretty girls in their picturesque costume were gathered round the village well, engaged in filling their classical-shaped pitchers. Every movement of their arms was grace itself. The action was not from the elbow, but from the shoulder, whereby one sees the arm extended in the curved line of beauty, instead of sticking out at a sharp angle, as with us Western races.

The weather had improved considerably. Our breakfast, for which we halted on the further outskirts of the village, was very agreeably discussed amidst much general good-humour. The peasants regarded us with frank undisguised curiosity, coming round to watch our proceedings.

After leaving Mörül we got really into the wilds.

A very bad road led up through a magnificent valley, the scenery most romantic; indeed every turn brought to view some new aspect, calling forth admiration. On our right was a fine trout-stream of that delicious brown tint welcome to the eye of the fisherman. At times the water was seen breaking over a rocky bed with much foam and fret, and then would find for itself a tranquil pool beneath the shadow of some mighty beech-tree.

The foliage of the forest, which closed down upon the valley, was simply magnificent. The trees in the Southern Carpathians are far finer than those of the Austrian Alps; they attain a greater average height. The variety, too, was very striking in many places. The strip of green pasturage that bordered our road was fringed with weeping birch-trees, which gave a singular charm to the woodland scene.

A turn in the direction of the valley brought us within sight of the high range of mountains forming the frontier between Hungary and Roumania. Some of the higher summits were ominously covered with dirty clouds. It was observed that they were lifting, at least some of the most sanguine thought so. However, judging from my former experiences in Upper Austria and Styria, I could not say that I thought it was a good sign, supposing even they

were lifting. I think myself there is better chance of fine weather in high regions when the clouds descend and disappear in the valleys.

Coming shortly to the foot of the mountain, the Sarka, which is upwards of 6000 feet in height, we made a temporary halt. We had now to change our *leiterwagen* for horses. All signs of a road had long ceased. On the green knoll in front were a herd of shaggy mountain horses with their Wallack drivers—as wild a scene as could well be imagined. Here we unpacked our various stores of provisions, fortified ourselves with a good dinner, and made necessary arrangements for the change of locomotion. There was some trouble in properly distributing the things for the pack-horses. Care had to be taken to give each horse his proper weight and no more. It was also very important to see that the packages were rightly balanced to avoid shifting.

I had left my own horse at Karansebes, because he was in need of rest; so F—— and I had to select horses from amongst the promiscuous lot brought up by the "hunt." We chose out a couple of decent-looking animals—indeed I rather prided myself on my selection, drew attention to his good points, and rallied F—— on his less successful choice.

At length everything was ready. Judging from the amount of baggage, the commissariat department was all right. The order of march was this: ten gentlemen, like so many knights on horseback with lances in rest, rode on in front, in Indian file: our long alpen-stocks really somewhat resembled lances. Each man had his gun slung behind. In the rear of these gallant knights came a dozen pack-horses heavily laden, each with his burden well covered up with sheepskins; behind again followed a lot of Wallacks—these irregulars were to act as beaters.

On we went in this order for seven hours. The pace was so slow that I confess it made me impatient, but our path through the forest was too narrow and too steep to do more than walk our horses in single file. The character of the vegetation visibly changed as we ascended. We left the oak and beech, and came upon a forest of pine-trees, and I thought of the lines—

> "This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
> Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight."

The grey moss which hangs in such abundant festoons from the fir-trees has a most singular effect, almost weird at times. These ancients of the forest,

with their long grey beards and hoary tresses, look very solemn indeed in the gloaming.

What unheeded wealth in these majestic trees, which grow but to decay! Enormous trunks lay on every side: some had passed into the rottenness which gives new life; and here fungi of bright and varied hues, grey lichen, and green moss preserved together the contour of the gigantic stem, which, prostrate and decayed now, had once held its head high amongst the lordlings of the forest.

In the last century these woods were tenanted by wild aurochs and the ibex, but both are extinct now in Hungary. Red-deer and the roe are still common enough. "The wild-cat, fox, badger, otter, marten, and other smaller carnivora are pretty numerous." Mr Danford[1] goes on to say that "feathered game is certainly not abundant. There are a good many capercailzie in the quiet pine-woods, pretty high up, but they are only to be got at during the pairing season. Hazel-grouse too are common in the lower woods, but are not easily found unless the call-system be adopted. Black game are scarcely worth mentioning as far as sport is concerned. Partridges scarce, not preserved, and the hooded crows and birds of prey making life

[1] The Ibis, vol. v., 1875. The Birds of Transylvania. By Messrs. Danford and Brown.

rather hard for them." Mr Danford further speaks of the chamois-eagle as "not rare in the higher mountains." The fisher-eagle "generally distributed." The king-eagle also "not rare." The carrion-vulture "common throughout the country," also the red-footed falcon. At one time and another I have myself seen most of these birds in the Carpathians, which form the frontier between Transylvania and Roumania.

Meanwhile I must resume the description of our march, which was a very slow affair. As we ascended, the trees decreased in size. We had long ago left the deciduous foliage behind us; but the pines themselves were smaller, interspersed with what is called "crooked timber," which grows in grotesque dwarf-like forms. The forest at last diminished into mere sparse shrubs, and finally we reached the treeless region, called in German the *Alpen*, where there is rich pasturage for cattle and sheep during the summer. We were now on tolerably level ground, and I thought we should get a trot out of our wretched horses, but no, not a step faster would they go. I believe we went at the rate of about two miles and a half an hour. We tried everything—I mean F—— and I—to get the animals to stretch out over the turf; but they set to kicking vigorously, backing and

rearing, so that to avoid giving annoyance to our companions, we were obliged to give in, and let the brutes go their own pace.

We had gone but a very little way on the Alpen before we found ourselves enveloped in a thick mist, added to which the track itself became uncertain. We went on: if the saying "slow but sure" has any truth in it, we ought to have been sure enough. My horse reminded me of the reply of the Somersetshire farmer, who, when he was asked if his horse was steady, answered, "He be so steady that if he were a bit steadier he would not go at all." Notwithstanding that we moved like hay-stacks, and the cavalcade seemed to be treading on one another's heels, yet, ridiculous to say, we got separated from our baggage. Darkness set in, and with it a cold drizzling rain—not an animated storm that braces your nerves, but a quiet soaking rain, the sort of thing that takes the starch out of one's moral nature.

All at once I was aroused from my apathy by a shout from the front calling out to the cavalcade to halt. I must observe a fellow on foot was leading the way in quality of guide. A pretty sort of a guide he turned out to be. He had led us quite wrong, and in fact found all of a sudden that he was on the verge of a precipice!

There was a good deal of unparliamentary language, expressed in tones both loud and deep. It was an act of unwisdom, however, to stop there in a heap on the grassy slope of a precipice, swearing in chorus at the poor devil of a Wallack. I turned my horse up the incline, resolved to try back, hoping to regain the lost track. It was next to impossible to halt, for we had not even got our plaids with us—everything was with the baggage-horses. Of course "some one had blundered." We all knew that! The guide stuck to it to the last that "he had not exactly lost his way." The fellow was incapable of a suggestion, and would have stood there arguing till doomsday if we had not sent him off with a sharp injunction to find some shepherds, and that quickly, who could take us to the rendezvous. Being summer time, there would be many shepherds about in different places on the Alpen, and the Wallack could hardly fail to encounter some herdkeeper before long.

We waited, as agreed, on the same spot nearly an hour, and then we heard a great shouting to the right of us. This was the guide, who I believe must have been born utterly without the organ of locality. He had found some shepherds, he told us subsequently, not long after he had left us, but then the fool of a fellow could not find his way back

to us, to the spot where we agreed to wait for him. There was a great deal of shouting before we could bring him to our bearings: the fog muffled the sound, adding to the perplexity.

The shepherds now took us in tow. We had to go back some distance, and then make a sharp descent to the right, which brought us to the rendezvous, and we effected at last a junction with our lost luggage. Arriving at the hut, which had been previously built for us, we were delighted to find a meal already prepared; it was in fact a very elaborate supper, but I think we were all too exhausted to appreciate the details. I know I was very glad to wrap my plaid round me and stretch myself on the floor.

The next morning we were up with the first streak of dawn. It was with some curiosity that I looked round at our impromptu dwelling and its surroundings, upon which we had descended in total obscurity the night before. The position of our camping-place was not badly chosen; we were just within the girdle of forest above which rises the grassy Alpen. About forty yards to the left or north-east of us was a small stream, the boundary, it seems, between the Banat and Transylvania. We were provided with two necessaries of life, wood and water, close at hand.

The hut, however, was more picturesque than practical, as subsequent events proved. The Wallacks had constructed it by driving two strong posts into the ground about ten yards apart. A tree was placed across, with a couple of smaller supports, and on this was made on a rough framework a sloping roof to the windward side. The roofing consisted entirely of leaves: it is called in German *laubhütte*, but is in fact more of a parasol than an umbrella. I should have preferred a hut made of bark, such as I have seen used by shepherds and sportsmen in Styria.

The interior of the hut had a droll appearance. Bacon, sausages, meal-bags, and various other things were hanging from pegs fastened into the supports of the roof; and the gear belonging to ten sportsmen were stowed away somehow. The place might have passed for the head-centre of a band of brigands.

The mountain on which we were encamped forms part of the western side of a long valley, at the bottom of which, quite 2000 feet below us, is a magnificent trout-stream. The sides of this valley are clothed with dense forests, with broken cliffs obtruding in places. The height of the Carpathians in this part of the range must not be taken as a gauge of the scenery, which quite equals in grandeur the higher Alps in many parts of Switzerland and



the Tyrol. Comparisons are dangerous, for the lovers of Switzerland will silence me with glaciers and eternal snow; these advantages I must concede, still contending, however, for the extreme beauty and wildness of the Southern Carpathians. The characteristics of the scenery are due to the broken forms of the crystalline rocks, the singular occurrence of sharp limestone ridges, and the deep forest-clad valleys, traversed by mountain torrents, which everywhere diversify the scene.

CHAPTER XI.

Chamois and bear hunting—First battue—Luxurious dinner 5000 feet above the sea-level—Storm in the night—Discomforts—The bear's supper—The eagle's breakfast—Second and third day's shooting—Baking a friend as a cure for fever—Striking camp—View into Roumania.

We started for our first battue in capital time, taking with us a crowd of Wallack beaters. Our places were appointed to us by the director of the hunt, and some of us had a stiffish climb before reaching the spot indicated. At a right angle to this valley there protrudes one of those characteristic limestone ridges; it terminates in an abrupt precipice or declivity above the stream. My place was some half-way up, a good position; for while I could see the course of the stream, I could command a fair range of ground above me.

It was impossible not to take note of the exquisite beauty of the whole scene, particularly as it then appeared. The sun breaking through the clouds, threw his sharply-defined rays of light into the depths of the misty defile, playing upon

the foam of the water, and giving life and colour to the hanging woods. I hardly took it in at the time, but rather remembered the details afterwards; for my thoughts were occupied in trying to judge the distance up to which I might fire with any chance of success—distances are always very deceptive on the mountains.

I must observe that we hoped to get a shot at some bears, but the chamois were the legitimate object of the hunt. The late autumn or early winter is the best time for bear-hunting.

I had not been long at my post when I heard two shots in quick succession fired below me. I found a chamois had been shot.

For our next battue we turned right-about face, the beaters coming from the other side; but we had bad luck. One of our party saw a bear at some distance, fired, and—missed it. The fact of a bear having been sighted encouraged us in keeping up our battues pretty late, but nothing more was shot that day. It was very disappointing, because if the bear was thereabouts our numerous staff of beaters ought to have turned him up again. Some of the party were altogether sceptical about a bear having been seen at all. Of course the man who had fired held to the bear as if it was the first article in his creed. The dissentients remarked that "believing

is seeing," as some one cleverly said of spiritualism. I don't know whether it was better to think you had missed your bear or had no bear to miss.

When we returned to the hut in the evening we found that a couple of men left in charge had made some great improvements. The Wallacks, who are sharp ready-handed fellows, to do them justice, had in our absence cut down some trees, split them with wooden pegs, and constructed out of the rough timber a long table and a couple of benches. These were placed in front of our hut; the supper was spread, the table being lighted with some four lanterns, supplemented by torches of resinous pine-wood.

The weather had been fair, though sport had been bad, so with a feeling not "altogether sorrow-like" we sat down to a hearty good meal. One of the dishes was chamois-liver, which is considered a great delicacy. We had, indeed, several capital dishes, well dressed and served hot—a most successful feast at 5000 feet above the sea-level. A vote of thanks was proposed for the cook, and carried unanimously. The wines were excellent. We had golden Mediasch, one of the best wines grown in Transylvania, Roszamáber from Karlsburg and Bakatar. The peculiarity about the first-named wine is that it produces an agreeable pricking on the tongue, called in German *tschirpsen.*

Before turning in we had a smoke, accompanied by tea with rum, the invariable substitute for milk in Hungary.

As there were four big fires burning in the clearing outside the hut, the whole scene was very bright and cheerful. The wood crackled briskly, the flames lit up the green foliage, and the moving figures of our attendants gave animation to the picture. Amongst ourselves there were a few snatches of song, and from up the hill where the Wallacks were camped came a chorus of not unmusical voices. One after another of our party dropped off, betaking himself to his natural rest. I was not the last, and must have slept as soon as I pulled the plaid over my ears, for I remembered nothing more.

I daresay I slept two or three hours; it may have been more or less, I don't know, but the next moment of consciousness, or semi-consciousness, was an uneasy feeling that a thief was trying to carry off a large tin bath that belonged to me, in my dream. As he dragged it away it seemed to me that he bumped it with all his might, making a horrible row. Meanwhile, oppressed by nightmare, I could not budge an inch nor utter a cry, though I would have given the world to stop the thief. I daresay this nonsense of my dream occupied but an instant of time. I woke to the consciousness of a loud peal



of thunder. "We are in for a storm," thought I, turning drowsily on my other side, not yet much awake to the probable consequences.

There was no sleep for me, however. The rest of the party were, one and all, up and moving about; and the noise of the storm also increased—the flashes of lightning were blinding, and the crash of the thunder was almost simultaneous. Through the open side of our hut I could see and hear the rain descending in torrents; fortunately it did not beat in, but it was not long before the wet penetrated the roof—that roof of leaves that I had mentally condemned the day before. After the rain once came through, the ground was soon soaking.

It was a dismal scene. I sat up with the others, "the lanterns dimly burning," and occupied myself for some time contriving gurgoyles at different angles of my body, but the wet would trickle down my neck.

We made a small fire inside the hut, essaying thereby to dry some of our things. My socks were soaking; my boots, I found, had a considerable storage of water; the only dry thing was my throat, made dry by swallowing the wood-smoke. A more complete transformation scene could hardly be imagined than our present woeful guise compared with the merriment of the supper-table, where all was song and jollity.

A German, who was sitting on the same log with myself, looking the picture of misery, had been one of the most jovial songsters of the evening.

"Thousand devils!" said he, "you could wring me like a rag. This abominable hut is a sponge—a mere reservoir of water."

"Oh, well, it is all part of the fun," said I, turning the water out of my boots, and proceeding to toast my socks by the fire on the thorns of a twig. "Suppose we sing a song. What shall it be?—'The meeting of the waters'?"

I had intended a mild joke, but the Teuton relapsed into grim silence.

The storm after a while appeared to be rolling off. The thunder-claps were not so immediately over our heads, and the flashes of lightning were less frequent; in fact a perfect lull existed for a short space of time, marking the passage probably to an oppositely electrified zone of the thunder-cloud. During this brief lull we were startled by hearing all at once a frightful yelling from the quarter where the Wallacks were camping, a little higher up than our hut.

Amidst the general hullabaloo of dogs barking and men shouting we at last distinguished the cry of "Ursa, ursa!" which is Wallachian for bear. Our camp became the scene of the most tremendous excitement; everybody rushed out, but in the thick

darkness it was impossible to pursue the bear. The more experienced sportsmen were not so eager to sally out after the bear, as they were anxious to prevent a stampede of the horses. When the latter were secured as well as circumstances would permit, a few guns were fired off to warn the bear, and then there was nothing for it but to watch and wait. The dogs went on barking for more than an hour, but otherwise the camp relapsed into stillness. I spent the remainder of the night sitting on a log before the fire, smoking my pipe with the bowl downwards, for the rain had never ceased, and clouds of steam rose from our camp-fires. The fear was that the powder would get wet. I must have dropped off my perch asleep, for I picked myself up the next morning out of a pool of water. It was already dawn, and looking eastward I saw a streak of light beneath a dark curtain of cloud, like the gleam on the edge of a sword, so sharp and defined was it. This was hopeful; it had ceased raining too, and a brisk wind came up the valley.

There was plenty to be done, in drying our clothes and preparing breakfast under difficulties. In the midst of this bustle a Wallack came in to tell us that the bear had really got into the camp in the night, and that he had killed and partly eaten one of the horses. This confirmed the fact that the

bear had been sighted by one of our party the day before; though we missed him, he had had his supper, and we were minus a horse.

I followed the Wallack a few steps up the hill, and there, not far off, on a knoll to the left, lay the carcass of the horse. It was a strange sight! Crowds of eagles, vultures, and carrion-crows were already feasting on the remains. Every moment almost, fresh birds came swooping down to their savage breakfast. Bears do not always eat flesh; but it seems when once tasted, they have a liking for it, and cease to be vegetarians. A simple-minded bear delights in maize, honey, wild apples and raspberries.

Our guns required a good deal of cleaning before we were ready to start for the second day's sport.

The result of the battues were not satisfactory. A fine buck was shot, and two or three chamois were bagged. We sighted no less than three bears, but they all broke through the line, and got off into the lower valleys. The provoking thing was that the bear or bears came again to our camp the second night; but they were able to do no mischief this time. The horses were kept better together, and the dogs scared the intruders from close quarters I imagine. Fires certainly do not frighten the bear in districts where they get accustomed to the shepherds' fires.

The third day of our shooting the weather was good, but we had no sport at all. I believe we should have done better with a different set of beaters, and this opinion was shared by several of our party. The *Förstmeister* had made a mistake in choosing men from the villages in the plain, instead of getting some of the hill shepherds, who know the mountains thoroughly well, and are not afraid of a bear when they see one. Some of our beaters were funky, I believe, and gave the bear a wide berth I feel sure, otherwise we must have had better sport.

During the evening of the third day F—— got a bad attack of fever, the intermittent fever common in all the Danubian Provinces. After supper the rain came on again, not violently, but enough to make everything very damp. I felt that under the circumstances the hut was a very bad place for him, so I cast about to see what I could do. As good-luck would have it, not very far off I discovered a horizontal fissure in the cliff, a sort of wide slit caused by one rock overhanging another ledge. It was fortunately sheltered from the wind, and promised to suit my purpose very well.

I collected a pile of sticks and firewood, thrust them blazing into the cavity, and fed the fire till the rocks were fit to crack with the heat. I

remembered having seen cottagers heat their ovens in this way in Somersetshire. I now raked out the fire and all the mortuary remains of insects, and then laid down a plaid thrice doubled for softness. Having done this, I seized upon my friend, weak and prostrate as he was, and shoved him into his oven like a batch of bread. I had previously given him a big dose of quinine (without which medicine I never travel in these parts), and now I set to work rubbing him, for he was really very bad indeed. In ten minutes or so F—— became warm as a toast. The terrible shivering was stopped, so my plan of baking was succeeding capitally. It is true he complained a little of one shoulder being rather overdone, but that was nothing. The vigorous rubbing was of great service also. I remembered the saying, "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well," so I rubbed my patient with a will. He objected rather, but he was too weak to make any resistance, so I rubbed on. I knew it would do him good in the end; so it did—I cured him. I think, however, the cure was mainly due to the baking!

After I had satisfied myself that my friend was going on well, I arranged our waterproofs in front of the opening like curtains; and then I turned in myself, for there was room for me too in the

oven. The rain descended pretty heavily in the night, but we slept well; and my patient presented a most creditable appearance in the morning.

On the fourth day some of our party bagged a few chamois, but the incidents of the day were in no way remarkable. At night F—— and I returned to our cave. The others had dubbed it the "Hôtel d'Angleterre." Considering the capability we had of warming-up, our quarters were not half bad.

The succeeding morning it was settled that we should strike our camp and move on to a fresh place. The beaters were sent back, for they were not a bit of good. Some of the party also left, amongst them my German friend. I do not think he will ever join a bear-hunt again, and his departure did not surprise us. After leaving our late quarters we rode for some hours along a singular ridge, so narrow at places as to leave little more than the width of the sheep-track on the actual summit. This ridge, more or less precipitous, rises above the zone of forest, and is covered with short thick grass. We passed, I should think, thirty flocks of sheep at different times, attended by the wild-looking Wallacks and their fierce dogs.

We made a halt in the middle of the day, but the

rain was coming down, and we were glad to be soon off again.

In the afternoon we got over into the Roumanian side of the frontier. The lofty limestone ridge of which I have spoken is in fact the boundary-line at this part. We were at an elevation of about 6000 feet, judging from the heights above us, when suddenly, or almost suddenly, the clouds were lifted which hitherto had enveloped us. It was like drawing up the curtain of a theatre. I never remember to have seen anything so striking as this sudden revealing of the fair world at our feet, bathed in glowing sunlight. We beheld the plains of Roumania far away stretched as a map beneath us; there, though one cannot discern it, the swift Aluta joins the Danube opposite Nicopolis; and there, within range of the glass, are the white mosques of Widdin in Bulgaria. We looked right down into Little Wallachia, where woods, rocks, and streams are tumbled about pellmell in a picturesque but unsettled sort of way. The very locality we were traversing is the part where the salt-smugglers used to carry on their trade, and many a sharp encounter has been fought here between them and the soldiers. This is now a thing of the past, since Roumania has also introduced a salt monopoly.

We were treated to this glorious view for little more than half an hour; the clouds then enveloped us again, and blotted out that fair world, with all its brightness, as if it were not. A strong wind blew up from the north, bringing with it a storm of rain and sleet which chilled us to the bones. The horses went slower and slower. Including the noonday halt, we had been ten hours in the saddle, and men and horses had had pretty well enough. I never recollect a colder ride.

We encamped that night in the forest. I looked out for another rock oven, and found one not otherwise unsuitable for shelter; but unfortunately this time the opening was to the windward side, so it was useless for our purpose. It was a good thing F—— did not have a return of his fever here, for we had to pass the night very indifferently.

The next morning the weather continued so persistently bad in the mountains that we voted the "hunt" at an end, and made the best of our way towards Mehadia, from which place we were in fact not so very distant. The descent was very rapid; at first through a thick forest, then into the open valley, where the heat became intense. The change of temperature was very striking.

CHAPTER XII.

Back at Mehadia—Troubles about a carriage—An unexpected night on the road—Return to Karansebes—On horseback through the Iron Gate Pass—Varhely, the ancient capital of Dacia—Roman remains—Beauty of the Hatszeg Valley.

AFTER a week of such weather as we had had in the mountains, a water-tight roof over one's head was in itself a luxury; so we were not inclined to quarrel with our quarters at the hotel at Mehadia, had they been even less good than they were.

F—— and I wished the next day to get back to Karansebes; he had left his carriage, and I my Servian horse. A Hungarian gentleman, one of the late expedition, said he would arrange to have a *vorspann*, if we would join him, as he also wanted to go there. This well-understood plan insures to the traveller relays of horses, and we were only too glad to acquiesce in the prospect of making the journey pleasantly and quickly.

The driver who was to take us the first stage came in and asked for a florin to get some oats for his horses. Very foolishly I gave him the money,

nothing doubting; and off he went to spend it on *slivovitz*, the result being that he was soon drunk and incapable. If we had realised the fact at once it might have been better, but we waited and waited, not knowing for a long time what had happened. This upset all our *vorspann* arrangements, and to our great disgust the best part of the day was wasted in seeking another vehicle and horses to take us to Karansebes. At last we succeeded in obtaining a lumbering sort of covered conveyance, whose speed we doubted from the first; but the owner, who was to drive us, declared he would get us to our journey's end in an incredibly short space of time.

We took care to give no *pourboire* in advance; but what with the inevitable dilatoriness of the people down in these parts, it was after seven o'clock before we left the Hercules-Bad, and we had fifty miles to drive.

Not even the ten hours of undisturbed consecutive repose in the downy bed at the Mehadia hotel had made up the deficiency of sleep during the foregoing week, and drowsiness overcame us. I think we must have had a couple of hours of monotonous jog-trot on the fairly level road when I fell asleep, and I suppose my companions did the same.

I must have slept long and profoundly, for when I woke, pulling myself together with some difficulty,



having slept in the form of a doubled-up zigzag, I found it was daylight. I was surprised that we were not moving; I rubbed my eyes, and looked out at the back of the cart, and there I saw a round tower on a slight eminence, encircled by a belt of fir-wood, the very counterpart of a pretty bit of scenery I had noticed in the twilight. I looked again, and sure enough it was just the tower itself and no other, and the very same belt of wood. The explanation was not far to seek. I was the first to wake up in our "fast coach." Every mortal soul—and there were five of us, besides the four horses—had, it seems, gone to sleep much about the same time that I did. The magic sleep of eld must have fallen upon us. The simple fact was, we had passed the night in the middle of the highroad. Was there ever anything so ridiculous?

We were about seven miles from Mehadia; I knew the country perfectly well. Of course we made a confounded row with the idiot of a driver, who certainly had been hired—not to go to sleep. I have known these Wallacks drive for miles in a state of somnolency, the horses generally keeping in the "safe middle course" of their own accord. As there were some awkward turns not far ahead of us, it was perhaps just as well that the horses stopped on this occasion.

Well, we jogged on all that day, reaching Karansebes between one and two o'clock. We had been some eighteen hours on the road!

Here F—— and I parted, my friend returning to Uibanya, while I pursued my way to Transylvania.

I slept the night at Karansebes, rising very early; indeed I started soon after four o'clock. I was again on my little Servian horse, who was quite fresh after his long rest, and I saw no reason why I should not reach Hatszeg the same evening, as the distance is not more than forty-five miles. About two miles from Karansebes I passed a hill crowned with a picturesque ruin, locally called Ovid's Tower. Tradition fondly believes that Ovid spent the last years of his banishment, not on the shores of the stormy Euxine, but in the tranquillity of these lovely valleys. Certain it is that the name and fame of many of the great Romans are still known to the Wallacks; and the story is told by Mr Boner, that they have a catechism which teaches the children to say that they have Ovid and Virgil for their ancestors, and that they are descended from demigods!

On my way I passed the villages of Ohaba, Marga, and Bukova. On arriving at Varhely, or Gradischtie, as it is called in Wallack language, I found that it was worth while to stay the night, for the sake of

having the afternoon to examine the Roman remains scattered about the neighbourhood.

The Wallack villages I had passed through were very miserable-looking places: they are generally in the south of Transylvania. The houses are mostly mere wattled wigwams, without chimneys; a patch of garden, rudely hurdled in, with the addition of a high stockaded enclosure for cattle. Some of the women are extremely pretty, and, as I have said before, the costume can be very picturesque; but they are often seen extremely dirty, in which case the filthy fringe garment gives them the appearance of savages.

Varhely is conspicuous for its dirt even among Wallachian villages, yet once it was a royal town. It is built on the site of the famous Sarmisegethusa, the capital of ancient Dacia. In Trajan's second expedition against Decebalus, King of the Dacians, he came from Orsova on the Danube by the same route that forms the highroad of this day—the same I had traversed in my way hither. It is curious to reflect how nation succeeding nation tread in each other's footsteps, through the self-same valley, beneath the shadow of the old hills. Here they have trudged, old Dacian gold-seekers, returning from the daily labours of washing the auriferous sands of the mountain streams; here, too, have tramped victorious

Roman soldiers—Avars, Tartars, Turks, and other intruders. A long and motley cavalcade has history marshalled along this route for two thousand years and more!

The old Dacians were strong enough we know to exact a yearly tribute from Domitian: it was for this insult that Trajan marched upon Dacia, defeating Decebalus at Klausenburg, in the heart of Transylvania, which was at the time their greatest stronghold. It was after this that the Dacian king retreated upon Sarmisegethusa, and there Trajan came down upon them through the Iron Gate Pass. Unable to defend themselves, the Dacians set fire to their royal city and fled to the mountains. On these ruins the Romans, ever ready to appropriate a good site, erected the city of Ulpia Trajana, connecting it by good roads with the existing Roman colonies at Karlsburg and Klausenburg.

Unless the traveller had brought historic facts with him to Gradischtie, he would hardly be induced to search for tesselated pavements and relics of royalty amongst the piggeries of this dirty Wallack village. It is a literal fact that a very fine specimen of Roman pavement exists here in an unsavoury outhouse, not unknown to pigs and their congeners.

This Hatszeg Valley, in the county of Hunyad, has

long been celebrated for the richness of its Dacian and Roman antiquities. These treasures have unfortunately been dispersed about amongst various general collections of antiquity, instead of being well kept together as illustrative of local facts and history. The archæologist must seek for these remains specially in the Ambras collection of the Archæological Museum at Vienna, the National Museum at Buda Pest, in the Bruckenthal Museum at Herrmannstadt, also in the Klausenburg Museum. Dr H. Finály, Professor of Archæology at the University of Klausenburg, is the great living authority on this interesting subject. To him I am indebted for some information, conveyed in a letter to a private friend.[1] The professor alludes to the fact of the treasures being all carried away, adding that on the spot very little is to be found except the remains of Roman encampments (*castra stativa*), Roman military roads, together with the foundations of buildings, the materials of which however are usually carried away by the peasants. Nor are the records of former interesting discoveries to be found in one volume, but are dispersed about in the various publications of learned societies, such as the 'Archæologiæi Közlemények' of the Hungarian Academy, the 'Year-Book of the Transylvanian Museum,' and

[1] Martin Diosy, Esq.

'Verhandlungen und Mittheilungen' of the Verein fur Siebenbürgische Landeskunde of Herrmannstadt.

That the materials of the old Roman buildings are now used for baser purposes, one has abundant proof; even in my hurried inspection I saw many a sculptured stone and fragment of fluted column doing duty as the support of a wretched Wallack shanty. Another evidence of the Roman occupation of the country occurs in the case of certain plants now found growing wild, which are exotic to the soil. This, I am told, occurs in a marked manner at Thorda, which was known to be a Roman colony. The plants, it may be presumed, were brought thither by the Roman legionaries. The most picturesque bit of Roman antiquity is the Temple at Demsus, within a short drive of Varhely. It is on a small eminence overlooking a cluster of Wallack dwellings, and has long been used as a church by these people.

The Hatszeg Valley, which comprehends the district I am now describing, is the pride of Transylvania, not less for its fertility than for its beauty. It has the appearance of having been filled in former geological ages by the waters of a widespread lake.

It was a lovely afternoon, but very hot, when I rode into the little town of Hatszeg. Everywhere is to be seen evidence of the careful cultivation of the

maize and other crops. Numerous villages dot the plain and cluster amidst the thickly-wooded hillsides. And now we come upon the railway system again, which has stretched out its feelers into the wilds of the Southern Carpathians. The railroad enters Transylvania by two routes. The main line is from Buda-Pest to Grosswardein, and so on by Klausenburg—the Magyar capital—to the present terminus of Kronstadt, one of the chief towns of the Saxon immigrants. This includes a branch to Maros Vasarhely. It is proposed to carry this line over a pass in the Carpathians to Bucharest. The second line of railway entering Transylvania starts from Arad, and terminates at Herrmannstadt, the Saxon capital, having a branch to the mineral district of Petrosèny.

It will be seen from the above that this "odd corner of Europe," as Transylvania has been called, is fairly well off for iron roads; and considering how short a time some portions of them have been opened, they have already borne good fruit in developing the resources of the country.

CHAPTER XIII.

Hungarian hospitality—Wallack laziness—Fishing—"Settled gipsies"—Anecdote—Old *régime*—Fire—Old Roman bath—The avifauna of Transylvania—Fly-fishing.

I HAD brought with me from London a letter of introduction to a Hungarian gentleman residing near Hatszeg, and finding his place was not far off, I rode over to see him the evening of my arrival.

I had merely intended to make a call, but Herr von B——, with true Hungarian hospitality, insisted that I should stay at his house as long as I remained in the neighbourhood.

"What! allow a stranger to remain at the inn? —impossible!" he said with resolute kindness.

It was in vain that I made any attempt to plead that I felt it was trespassing too much on his hospitality. His answer was very decided. He put the key of the stable which held my horse in his pocket, and turning to one of his people he gave orders that my things should be brought hither from the Hatszeg inn.

I was soon quite at home with my new friends, a young married couple, whose *ménage*, though very simple, was thoroughly refined and agreeable. As it was my first visit to a Hungarian house, I found many things to interest me. Several of the dishes at table were novelties, the variety consisting more in the cooking than in the materials; for instance, we had maize dressed in a dozen different ways. It was generally eaten as a sort of pudding at breakfast, at which meal there was also an unfailing dish of water-melons. Of course we had *paprika handl* (chicken with red pepper), and *gulyas*, a sort of improved Irish stew; and gipsy's meat, also very good, besides excellent soups and many nameless delicacies in the way of sweets.

All Hungarian men are great smokers, but as a rule the ladies do not smoke; there are some exceptions, but it is considered "fast" to do so.

The peasants in the Hatszeg Valley are all Wallacks, and as lazy a set as can well be imagined; in fact, judging by their homes, they are in a lower condition than those of the Banat. So much is laziness the normal state with these people that I think they must regard hard work as a sort of recreation. Their wants are so limited that there is no inducement to work for gain. What have they to work for beyond the necessary quantity of

maize, *slivovitz*, and tobacco? Their women make nearly all the clothes. Wages of course are high—that is the trouble throughout the country. If the Wallack could be raised out of the moral swamp of his present existence he might do something, but he must first feel the need of what civilisation has to offer him.

The village of Rea, where I was staying, is about the wildest-looking place one can well imagine in Europe. The habitations of the peasants are made of reed and straw; the hay-ricks are mere slovenly heaps, partially thatched; the fences are made up of odds and ends. As for order, the whole place might have been strewn with the *débris* of a whirlwind and not have looked worse. As a natural consequence of all this slatternly disorder, fire is no uncommon occurrence; and when a fire begins, it seldom stops till it has licked the whole place clean—a condition not attainable by any other process.

Fishing was a very favourite amusement with us, and Herr von B—— several times organised some pleasant excursions with that object. One day we went up the Lepusnik, a magnificent trout-stream.

We drove across the valley, and then followed a narrow gorge near the village of Klopotiva. The

scenery was enchanting, but our fishing was only moderately successful; for the trout were very much larger than in the valley nearer home, and they bothered us sadly by carrying away our lines.

Some way up the valley we came upon a little colony of gipsies, who were settled there. Their dwellings were more primitive than the Wallacks even. The huts are formed of plaited sticks, with mud plastered into the interstices; this earth in time becomes overgrown with grass, and as the erection is only some seven feet high, it has very much the appearance of an exaggerated mound or anthill, and would never suggest a human habitation.

A fire was burning in the open, with a tripod to support the iron pot—just as we see in England in a gipsy's camp; and the people had a remarkable resemblance in complexion and feature, only that here they were far less civilised than with us.

I entered one of the huts, in which by the way I could scarcely stand upright, and found there a man employed in making a variety of simple wooden articles for household use. The gipsies are remarkably clever with their hands; many of these wooden utensils are fashioned very dexterously, and even display some taste. The gipsy, moreover, is always the best blacksmith in all the country round; and

as for their music, I have before spoken of the strange power these people possess of stirring the hearts of their hearers with their pathetic strains. It has often seemed to me that this marvellous gift of music is, as it were, a language brought with them in their exile from another and a higher state of existence.

That these poor outcasts are capable of noble self-sacrifice, the story I am about to relate will testify. Not far from this very gipsy settlement, in a wild romantic glen, is a steep overhanging rock, which is known throughout the country as the "Gipsy's Rock," and came to be so called from the following tragical occurrence. It seems that many years ago —about the middle of the last century, I believe— there was a famine in the land, and the poor gipsies, poorer than all the rest, were reduced to great straits. Some of them came to the neighbouring village and begged hard for food. The selfish people turned them away, or at least tried to do so; but one poor fellow would not cease his importunities, and said that his children were literally starving. "Then," said one of the villagers in a mocking tone, "I will give your family a side of bacon if you will jump that rock."

"You hear his promise?" cried the gipsy, appealing to the idle crowd. He said not another

word, but rushing from their midst, clambered up the rock, and in another instant took the fatal leap!

I see no reason to discredit the story, generally believed as it is in the district; and, happily for the honour of human nature, it has many a parallel, in another way perhaps, but equal in self-sacrifice and devotion.

The gipsies in Hungary are supposed to number at least 150,000. The Czigany, as they are called, made their appearance early in the fifteenth century, having fled, it is believed, from the cruelty of the Mongol rulers. They were allowed by King Sigismund to settle in Hungary, and were called in law the "new peasants." Before the reforms of 1848 they were in a state of absolute serfdom, and could not legally take service away from the place where they were born. The case of the gipsy was the only instance in Hungary, even in the Hungary of the old *régime*, of absolute serfdom; for oppressive as were the obligations of the land-holding peasant to his lord, yet the relation between them was never that of master and slave. As a matter of fact, if the Hungarian peasant gave up his *session* — that is to say, the land he occupied in hereditary use—he was free to go wheresoever he pleased,

and was not forced to serve any master. In practice the serf would not readily relinquish the means of subsistence for himself and family, and generally preferred the burden, odious though it was, of the *robot*, or forced labour. This personal liberty, which the Hungarian peasant in the worst of times has preserved, is deep-rooted in the growth of the nation, and accounts for their characteristic love of freedom in the present day. It was this that made the freedom-loving peasant detest the military conscription imposed by the Austrians in 1849, an innovation the more obnoxious because enforced with every species of official brutality.

The poor Czigany had not been so fortunate as to preserve even the Hungarian serf's modicum of liberty. Mr Paget mentions that forty years ago he saw gipsies exposed for sale in the neighbouring province of Wallachia.

There are a great many "settled gipsies" in Transylvania. Of course they are legally free, but they attach themselves peculiarly to the Magyars, from a profound respect they have for everything that is aristocratic; and in Transylvania the name Magyar holds almost as a distinctive term for class as well as race. The gipsies do not assimilate with the thrifty Saxon, but prefer to be hangers-on at

the castle of the Hungarian noble: they call themselves by his name, and profess to hold the same faith, be it Catholic or Protestant. Notwithstanding that, the gipsy has an incurable habit of pilfering here as elsewhere; yet they can be trusted as messengers and carriers — indeed I do not know what people would do without them, for they are as good as a general "parcels-delivery company" any day; and certainly they are ubiquitous, for never is a door left unlocked but a gipsy will steal in, to your cost.

The gipsy is sometimes accused of having a hand in incendiary fires; but I believe the general testimony is in his favour, and against the Wallack, whose love of revenge is the ugliest feature in his character. These people seem to forget the saying that "curses, like chickens, come home to roost," for they will set fire to places under circumstances that not unfrequently involve themselves in ruin.

We were calmly sitting one day at dinner when we heard a great row all at once; looking out of the window, we saw dense clouds of smoke and flame not a hundred yards from the house. We rushed out immediately to render assistance, but without water or engines of any kind it was difficult to do much. However, Herr von B—— and myself got on the top of the outhouse that was in flames,

and stripped off the wooden tiles, removing out of the way everything that was likely to feed the fire. There stood close by a crowd of Wallacks, utterly panic-stricken it seemed: they did nothing but scream and howl as if possessed. The building belonged to one of them, but he only screamed louder than the rest, and was not a bit of use, though he was repeatedly called on to help. If the wind had set the other way, it would have been just a chance if the whole village had not been burned down. In this instance the fire was caused by mere carelessness.

The number of excursions to be made in the Hatszeg Valley is endless. On one occasion I took my horse and rode off alone to inspect mines and mining works in the mountains. While looking over the ironworks at Kalan, I was told of the existence of some Roman remains in the neighbourhood, so taking a boy from the works with me to act as guide, I set off, walking, to examine the spot. He led me into the middle of a field, not far off the main road; and here I found the remains of a Roman bath of a very interesting character.

It was singularly constructed. I must observe first that there was a protruding mass of rock rising about fifteen feet above the surrounding ground, and of considerable circumference. In the

middle of this there was a circular excavation ten feet in diameter and ten feet deep. At the bottom I discovered a spring of tepid mineral water, which flowed away through a small section cut perpendicularly out of the wall of the great bath; judging from other incisions in the stone, a wooden slide may have been used to bay back the water. On the face of the rock I noticed a Roman inscription, but too much mutilated for me to make anything of it. An attempt had been evidently made to utilise this mineral water, for in the field were some primitive wooden bathing-houses, and not far off there was actually a little inn, but I fear the public had not encouraged the revival of the Roman bath.

In poking about after game or minerals, one frequently comes upon evidence of the former occupation of the country. Speaking of game, the partridges are not preserved, and they are scarce; of course I was too early, but in autumn the woodcock-shooting, I understand, is first-rate. Quails and snipes are also common in the Hatszeg Valley.

Herr von Adam Buda, or, as one should say in Hungarian, Buda Adam (for the Christian name always comes last), has devoted much time to the avifauna of Transylvania. He has a fine

collection of stuffed birds at his residence at Rea, near Hatszeg. These are birds which he has himself shot, and he is quite the local authority upon the subject.

I have alluded to the trout-fishing in the district. I went out frequently, and had generally very fair sport indeed. Mr Danford, in his paper in 'The Ibis,'[1] in speaking of fishing, says: "Perhaps the best stream in the country is the Sebes, which joins the Strell near Hatszeg. The trout are not bad, one to two lbs. in weight; and the grayling-fishing is really good—almost any number may be taken in autumn, when weather and water are in good order. The Sil also, near Petrosèny, is a fine-looking river, and used to be celebrated for its so-called 'salmon-trout;' but these had quite disappeared when we saw it, having been blown up with dynamite, a method of fishing very commonly practised in the country, but now forbidden by law. Indeed fly-fishing is gaining ground, and English tackle in great demand."

This practice of the wholesale destruction of fish by the use of dynamite has not been stopped a moment too soon; and some time must now elapse in certain waters before they can become properly stocked again.

[1] Vol. v., The Birds of Transylvania.

It was now time for me to quit the happy valley, and I bade adieu to my kind friends near Hatszeg. I believe if I had remained to this day, I should not have outstayed my welcome. I had come to pay a morning visit, and I stopped on more than a fortnight.

The Hungarian has a particularly pleasant way of greeting a stranger under his own roof. He gives you the idea that he has been expecting you, though in reality your existence and name were unknown to him till he read the letter or the visiting-card with which you have just presented him.

I now sent my portmanteau, &c., on to Herrmann-stadt, packed my saddle-bags to take with me, and once more rode off into the wilds. My destination this time was Petrosèny.

CHAPTER XIV.

On horseback to Petrosèny—A new town—Valuable coal-fields—Killing fish with dynamite and poison—Singular manner of repairing roads—Hungarian patriotism—Story of Hunyadi Janos—Intrusion of the Moslems into Europe.

THE history of the town of Petrosèny is as short as that of some of the western cities of America. It began life in 1868, and is now the terminus of a branch railway.

Before the wicked days of dynamite, and as long ago as the year 1834, a fisherman was leisurely catching salmon-trout up the Sil; he had time to look about him, and he noticed that in many places the rocks had a black appearance. He broke off some pieces and carried them home, when he found that they burned like coal; in fact he had discovered a coal mine! Those were simple-minded days, for instead of running off with these valuable cinders under his arm, fixing on an influential chairman and a board of directors for his new company, this good man did nothing but talk occasionally of the black rock that he had seen when fishing.

Many years elapsed before any advantage was taken of this valuable discovery. At length a more careful search was made, and it proved that coal existed there in abundance! In 1867 mining was commenced on a large scale by the Kronstäder Company. The next year a town was already growing up in the neighbourhood of the mines, and increased in a most surprising manner. In 1870 the railway was opened from Petrosèny to Piski, on the main line from Arad. The growth of the place, however, received a check in the financial crisis of 1873.

The town itself is in no way remarkable, being a mere collection of dwellings for the accommodation of the miners and the employés; but the scenery in the neighbourhood is simply magnificent. In approaching Petrosèny the railway rises one foot in forty, no inconsiderable gradient.

The coal-fields are partly in the hands of Government, and partly owned by the before-named Kronstäder Company. Between these separate interests there is not much accord. The Kronstäders say that Government has not behaved fairly or openly, but has secured to itself so many "claims" as to damage considerably the prospects of the private speculators.

While at Petrosèny, I heard great complaints against the Government for selling coal at such a

low price that they must actually work at a loss. The Kronstäder Verein say they are prevented in this way from making their fair profits, as they are obliged to sell down to the others. It would appear to be a suicidal policy for the pockets of the tax-payers to be mulcted for the sake of securing a prospective monopoly and the ruin of a private enterprise. As it stands it is a pretty quarrel.

Writing in 1862, Professor Ansted says: "The coal of Hungary is of almost all geological ages, and though none is first-rate in point of quality, a large proportion is excellent fuel. The coals most valued at the present moment in Hungary are those of the *Secondary* and *not* of the *Palæozoic* period. But the great body of coal is very much newer; it is *Tertiary*, and till lately was regarded as of comparatively modern date. In the Ysil Valley there is a splendid deposit of *true* coal."[1] Since the time when the above was written the resources of the Ysil or Sil Valley—viz., Petrosèny—have been abundantly developed, as we see, and it has been pronounced to be "one of the finest coal mines in Europe." One of the seams of coal is ninety feet in thickness; but up to the present time it has been found impossible to make it into coke.

The miners at Petrosèny are great offenders in

[1] A Short Trip in Hungary and Transylvania, p. 242.

regard to the abominable practice of killing fish by means of dynamite. It is very well to say that the law forbids it; but the administrators of the law are not always a terror to evil-doers, and perhaps the timely present of a dish of fine trout does not sharpen the energies of the officials. Another mode of destroying fish is practised by the Wallacks. There grows in this locality a poisonous plant, of which they make a decoction and throw it into the river, thereby killing great numbers of fish at a time.

While driving round Petrosèny I had an opportunity of seeing the Hungarian manner of making roads. The peasants have to work on the roads a certain number of days in the year, and if they possess a pair of oxen, these must also be brought for a specified time. An inspector is supposed to watch over them. One afternoon we came upon a score of peasants, men and women, who were engaged in mending a bridge. Their proceedings were just an instance of how "not to do a thing." They were placing trees across the gap, and the interstices they were filling up with leafy branches, over which was thrown a quantity of loose earth and stones well patted down to give the appearance of a substantial and even surface. Of course the first rain would wash away the earth and leave as nice a hole as you could wish your enemy to put his foot into. For

all purposes of traffic the bridge was safer with the honest gap yawning in the traveller's face.

It is said that the magistrates make matters easy and convenient for the peasants, if the latter, by being let off public work, attend gratuitously to the more pressing wants of the individual magistrate.

"You see, nobody suffers but the Government," says the man of easy conscience, not seeing that, after all, the good condition of the roads concerns themselves more than the officials in the capital.

In many things the Hungarians are like children, and they have not yet grown out of the idea that it is patriotic to be unruly. The fact is, the Central Government was so long in the hands of the Vienna Cabinet, who were obnoxious in the highest degree to the Hungarians, that the latter cannot get the habit of antagonism out of their minds, though the reconciliation carried through by Deák in 1867 entirely restored self-government to Hungary. "What do we want with money?" said a gentleman of the old school. "Money is only useful for paying taxes, and if we have not got it for that purpose, never mind!"

On leaving Petrosèny the route I proposed to myself was to take the bridle-path over the mountains to Herrmannstadt. But in following this out, I omitted to visit the Castle of Hunyad—a great mistake, for

castles are rare in this part of Europe, and the romantic and singular position of Schloss Hunyad renders it quite unique in a way. It is situated, I am told, on a lofty spur of rock, washed on three sides by two rivers which unite at its base, a drawbridge connecting the building with a fortified eminence high above the stream.

The place is associated with the name of Hungary's greatest hero, John Hunyadi, who was born near by, and who subsequently built the castle. The story of his birth, which took place somewhere about 1400, is romantic enough. His mother was said to be a beautiful Wallack girl called Elizabeth Marsinai, who was beloved by King Sigismund. When he left her he gave her his signet ring, which she was to bring to him in Buda if she gave birth to a son.

Showing all proper respect to the wishes of its parents, a child of the "male persuasion" made its appearance in due course of time; and the joyful mother, accompanied by her brother, set off walking to Buda, with the small boy and the ring for credentials. When resting by the way in a forest the child began playing with the ring, and a jackdaw, who in all ancient story has a weakness for this sort of ornament, pounced upon the shining jewel and carried it off to a tree. The brother with commendable quickness took up his bow and shot the bird;

thus the ring was recovered, and the story duly related to the king, who evolved out of the incident a prophetic omen of the boy's future greatness. His majesty had the child brought up at the Court, and bestowed upon him the town of Hunyad and sixty surrounding villages.

It was in the reign of Sigismund that the Turks first regularly invaded Hungary; and the young Hunyadi soon distinguished himself by a series of victories over the Moslems. To him Europe is indebted for the check he gave the Turks. He forced them to relinquish Servia and Bosnia, and in his time both provinces were placed under the vassalage of Hungary. We may go further and say that had Hunyadi's plans for hurling back the Moslem invaders been seconded by the other Christian powers, we should not have the Eastern Question upon our hands in this our day. But, alas! all the solicitations of this great patriot were met with short-sighted indifference by the Courts of Europe. It is true that the Diet of Ratisbon, summoned by the Emperor Frederick, voted 10,000 men-at-arms and 30,000 infantry to assist in repelling the Turks; and it is true that the Pope in those days was anti-Turkish, and vowed on the Gospels to use every effort, even to the shedding of his blood, to recover Constantinople from the

infidels. The old chronicles give a curious account of the monk Capestrano, who, bearing the cross that the Pope had blessed, traversed Hungary, Transylvania, and Wallachia, to rouse the people to the danger that threatened them from the intrusion of the Moslem into Europe. Special church services were instituted; and at noon the "Turks' bell" was daily sounded in every parish throughout these border-lands, when prayers were offered up to arrest the progress of the common enemy of Christendom.

Hunyadi's son, Matthias Corvinus, rivalled his father as a champion against the Turks. He was elected King of Hungary, and after reigning forty-two years, passed away; and the people still say, "King Matthias is dead, and justice with him."

CHAPTER XV.

Hunting for a guide—School statistics—Old times—Over the mountains to Herrmannstadt—Night in the open—Nearly setting the forest on fire—Orlat.

I FOUND some difficulty while at Petrosèny in getting a guide to convoy me over the mountains to Orlat, near Herrmannstadt. My Hungarian friend proposed that, choosing a saint's day, we should ride over to the neighbouring village of Pétrilla, where I would certainly find some peasant able and willing amongst the numbers who crowd into the village on these occasions.

Accordingly we went over, and I was very pleased I had gone, for the rural gathering was a very pretty and characteristic sight. The people from all the country round were collected together in the churchyard, dressed of course in their bravery, and a very goodly show they made. They were the finest Wallacks I had seen anywhere; they were superior looking in physique, and many of them must really have been well off, if one may judge a man's wealth by the richness of the wife's dress.

Some of the young girls were very pretty, and wore their silver-coin decorations with quite a fashionable coquettish air. The Wallack women, whether walking or standing, never have the spindle out of their hands: the attitude is very graceful, added to which the thread must be held daintily in the fingers. They are very industrious, making nearly all the articles of clothing for the family.

After a great deal of palavering—I think we must have spoken to every able-bodied man in the churchyard—I at last induced a young Wallachian to say he would accompany me. He spoke a little German, which was a great advantage. I told him to procure himself a good horse, and to take care that all his arrangements were completed before night, as I wished to start very early the following morning.

To this he replied that it would be quite necessary to start early, and begged to know if five o'clock would be too soon; adding that as I must pass through Pétrilla, would I meet him at the corner of the churchyard?

To this I agreed, repeating that we were to meet not a moment later than five o'clock. My friend and I returned to Petrosèny, and the afternoon was occupied in making preparations for two days on the mountains. I supplied myself with a good

amount of *slivovitz*, as a medium of exchange for milk and cheese with the shepherds, who understand this kind of barter much better than any money transactions.

The next day, when it came, brought a continuance of good weather, and I was up betimes, looking forward with pleasure to the mountain ride. I reached Pétrilla a few minutes after five o'clock; but my man was not at the churchyard corner, whereupon I rode all round the churchyard, thinking he might by mistake have pitched on some odd corner, and be out of sight under the trees. However, I looked in vain—a man on horseback is not hidden like a lizard between two stones! Verily he was not there.

I waited half an hour all to no purpose. I now resolved to try and find out where he lived. I had understood that he belonged to the village. After a great deal of trouble and bother, and poking of my nose into various interiors where the families were still *en déshabillé*, I unearthed my guide. He coolly said that he was waiting for the horse, which was to be brought to him by some other lazy fellow not yet up.

I could not speak Wallachian, and he pretended not to understand a word of my wrathful tirade in German, which was all nonsense, because I found

later that he spoke that language fairly well. I insisted that he should come with me to find the horse, and so he did at last, in a dilatory sort of way, and then it turned out that the animal was waiting at the other end of the village for his rider.

Well, thought I, we shall start now; but no, there were two to that bargain. The Wallack calmly informed me that he must return to his hut, for he had not breakfasted. Not to lose sight of him, I returned too. He then with Oriental deliberation set about making a fire, and proceeded to cook his *polenta* of maize. I had got hungry again by this time, though I had breakfasted at Petrosèny before starting, so I partook of some of his mess, which was exceedingly good, much better than oatmeal porridge.

In consequence of all these delays it was after eight o'clock before we really started. The horse which my guide had procured for himself was a wretched animal—a tantalising object for vultures and carrion-crows—instead of being a good strong horse, as I had stipulated he should be; but there was no help for it now, so on we went.

My companion soon gave me to understand in good German that he was a superior sort of fellow. He had been to school at Hatszeg, and knew a thing or two. I have heard it stated that the Wallacks

are so quick that they make great and rapid progress at first, distancing the German children; but that they seem to stop after a while, and even fall back into ignorance and their old slovenly ways of life.

On referring to the statistics of Messrs Keleti and Beöthy, I see that only eleven per cent of Roumains (Wallacks) attend the primary schools, and this percentage had not increased between the years 1867 and 1874. The percentage of the Magyars attending the primary schools is forty-nine per cent, while the Slavs, again, are twenty-one.

"The world is only saved by the breath of the school-children," says the Talmud. A conviction of this truth makes every inquiry into educational progress extremely interesting. According to M. Keleti's tables, fifty-three per cent of the males and sixty-two per cent of the females in Hungary generally are still illiterates. This excludes from the calculation children under six years of age. On comparing notes, other countries do not come out so very much better. It is calculated that 30 per cent of French conscripts are unable to read; moreover, in *our* "returns" of marriages in England in 1845, a percentage of forty-one signed the register with *marks*. In 1874 the number of illiterates was reduced to twenty-one per cent.

I elicited a good many interesting facts from my

Wallack guide, several that were confirmatory of the terrible ignorance existing amongst the priesthood of the Greek Church. The popes do not commend themselves to the good opinion of the male part of the community, whatever hold they may have on the superstition of the women. I cannot see myself how things are to be mended till the position and education of the priesthood are improved. It is said that, in the old days before '48, when the peasants had to render forced labour to the lord of the land, the Transylvanian nobles would have the village pope up to the castle, and keep him there for a fortnight in a state of intoxication, thus preventing his giving out the saints' days at the altar on Sunday. This was done that their own harvest-work should proceed without the inconvenience of suspending operations at a critical time on *fête* days, the people themselves being too ignorant to consult the calendar!

The Magyar nobles are improved, and do not play these pranks now; but very little progress, I imagine, has been made on the side of the priests. Chatting with my Wallack guide helped to beguile the tedious nature of the ride, an ascent over roughish ground all the way. Arriving at the summit, we made a noonday halt.

A fire was soon burning, whereat our dinner of

robber-steak was roasted; but the halt was shorter than usual, for I was anxious to push on, remembering how much time had been lost at starting.

We now gained the other side of the mountain-chain, passing the remains of an old Turkish camp, the outlines of which were quite visible. From this point there is a magnificent view, interminable forests to the eastward clothing the deep ravines that score the hillsides. The accidents of light and shade were particularly happy on this occasion, bringing out various details in the picture in a very striking manner. As a general rule, there is no time so unpropitious for scenic effect as noonday.

We passed from the grassy Alpen down into the thick of the forest, losing very soon any glimpse of the distant view, or any help from conspicuous landmarks. It was a labyrinth of trees, with tracks crossing each other in a most perplexing manner. I could not have got on without a guide.

When the evening approached I thought it was time to look out for quarters for the night. Our first necessity was water, but we went on and on without coming upon a stream. It was provoking, for we had passed so many springs and rivulets earlier in the day, and now darkness threatened to wrap us round with the mantle of night before we had arranged our bivouac. When the sun sets in

the East, it is like turning off the gas; you are left in darkness suddenly, without any intervening twilight. As a fact one knows this perfectly well; but habit is stronger than reason, and day after day I went on being perplexed, and often unready for the "early-closing" system.

"Water we must have," said I to the Wallack. "Let us strike off from the direct route and follow the lead of this valley, we shall find water in the bottom for a certainty."

We hurried forward, leading our horses through the thick undercover, always diving deeper into the ravine. At length I discovered a trickling amongst the stones, and a little farther on we came upon a grassy spot beneath some enormous pine-trees. It was an ideal place for a bivouac!

When the horses had been carefully picketed, we proceeded to make a fire and cook our supper, which consisted of gipsy-meat and tea.

The meal finished to my perfect satisfaction, (how good everything tastes under such circumstances!) I then stretched myself on a sloping bank overspread by a thick covering of dry *needle-wood*, as the Germans call the leaves of the fir-tree. How soft and clean it felt, and how sweet the aromatic perfume that pervaded the whole place! Lighting my pipe, I gave myself up to the perfect enjoyment

of repose amidst this romantic scene. The Wallack, covered by his fur *bunda*, was already asleep, and save the bubbling of the water in the little stream, and the crackling of the fire, there was absolutely not a sound or a breath. Through the tasselled pine branches, festooned with streamers of grey moss, I could see the stars shining in the blue depths of ether. One can realise in these regions the intense *depth* of the heavens when seen at night; we never get the same effect in our "weeping skies."

Before wrapping my plaid round me for the night, I threw some fresh wood on the fire, which, crushing down upon the hot embers, sent up a scintillating shower of sparks that ran a mad race in and out of the greenery. I saw that the horses were all right, I put my gun handy, and then I gave myself up to sleep.

I do not know how long I had slept, but I was conscious of being bothered, and could not rouse myself at once. I dreamed that a bear was sniffing at me, but instead of being the least surprised or frightened, I said to myself in my dream, as if it was quite a common occurrence, "That's the bear again, he always comes when I am asleep." The next moment, however, I was very effectually awakened by a tug that half lifted me off the ground. I must mention that I had tied my horse's

halter to my waist-belt in case of any alarm in the night, for I sleep so soundly always that no ordinary noise or movement ever wakes me. I sprang up of course, calling the Wallack at the same time. Something had frightened the horses, and they had attempted to bolt. We found them trembling from head to foot, but we could not discover the cause of their fright. I fired off my revolver twice; the Wallack in the meantime had lighted a bundle of resinous fir branches as a torch. He had carefully arranged it before he slept; it is a capital thing, as it gives a good light on an emergency.

After making an examination of the place all round, and finding nothing, we made up a bright fire, and again laid ourselves down to rest. I had my saddle for a pillow, and it was not half bad. Before giving myself over to sleep I listened and listened again, but I heard nothing except the hooting of the owls answering each other in the distance. The night had grown very cold, and a heavy dew was falling, but notwithstanding these discomforts I had another good nap.

Next morning, after a hearty breakfast, we were off early. Instead of going uphill again to recover our former route, we followed the stream, which gradually increased in size, and we came at last to a place where a dam had been thrown across the

valley with the object of floating the wood cut in the forest. This small lake was very pretty; the water was as clear as crystal. Farther on we came upon another dam of larger dimensions; but though it had evidently been quite recently constructed, there was no one about, and no signs of wood-cutting. Here we began to ascend again, and about mid-day got to a place called La Durs, a customhouse for cattle coming from Roumania; it is not absolutely on the frontier, but very near it. I heard later that this district has a bad reputation for smugglers and robbers, the latter being on the increase, it is said; always the same story of unrepressed lawlessness on the frontier.

We made no stay at the customhouse, but rode on a couple of miles farther, where, coming upon a nice spring, we dined. Not a single shepherd had we met, so there had been no chance of bartering for milk; it was not surprising, because our track had been almost entirely in the forests, and of course the shepherds are higher up on the Alpen. At this last halting-place we nearly set the forest on fire. The grass was very dry all round, and before I was aware of it, the fire ran along the ground and caught the trees. It blazed up in an inconceivably short time. I rushed up directly, to cut off what branches I could with

my bowie-knife; but though calling loudly to the Wallack to assist me, he never concerned himself in the least. This exasperated me beyond measure, seeing what mischief was likely to accrue from the misadventure. Luckily a man came up, riding on one horse and leading another, and he readily gave me a helping hand, and between us we put out the fire. The Wallack never raised a finger!

Getting into conversation with the new-comer, I found that he was going to Orlat, whereupon I arranged to go on with him. Accordingly I paid my guide, and was not sorry to have done with him, he had so disgusted me about the fire, and I was especially glad to get quit of his wretched horse, which had greatly retarded our progress. I transferred my saddle-bags to the spare horse, and we got on much faster, reaching Orlat by sunset.

Before descending into the plain we had a magnificent view. Herrmannstadt seemed almost at our feet, though in reality it was still a long way off; the Fogaraser Mountains stretching away towards Kronstadt, appeared in all their picturesque irregularity, and along the plain at their base were scattered the villages of the Saxonland, each with its fortress-church, a relic of the old time, when the brave burghers had to hold their own against Turk and Tartar.

At Orlat I found a small inn, but they had no travellers' room in it; however some of the family were good enough to turn out, and I was very glad to turn in, and that rather early.

CHAPTER XVI.

Herrmannstadt—Saxon immigrants—Museum—Places of interest in the neighbourhood—The fortress-churches—Heltau—The Rothen Thurm Pass—Turkish incursions.

THE following morning a ride of ten miles brought me to Herrmannstadt. Here I put up at the Hotel Neurikrer, a comfortable house; it was a new sensation getting into the land of inns. The fact is, the Saxons are not indifferent to the existence of inns; it relieves them of the necessity of hospitality. The Hungarian will take the wheels off his guest's carriage and hide them to prevent his departure, whereas the Saxon would be more inclined to speed the parting guest with amiable alacrity. There is an old-world look about Herrmannstadt that gives one the sensation of being landed in another age; it is a case of Rip Van Winkle, only "t'other way round," as the saying is: one has awakened from the sleep in the hills to walk down into a mediæval town, finding the speech and fashions of old Germany—Luther's Germany!

The Saxon immigrants in Hungary number nearly

two millions. The greater proportion of these is found in Transylvania; the rest, some forty thousand, have a compact colony under the shadow of the Tatra Mountains, in the north of Hungary, called from time immemorable the "Free District." But it was to the slopes of the Southern Carpathians, to the "land beyond the forest," where the first Saxons came and settled. It is still called "Altland," being the oldest of their possessions in Hungary. In fact this appellation of the "Oldland" belongs, strictly speaking, to the Herrmannstadt district. Formerly no Hungarian was allowed to settle in the town, so jealous were the burghers of their privileges. I believe the earliest date of the Saxon immigration is 1143. The country had been wasted by the incursions of the Tartars, and in consequence the Servian Princess Helena, widow of the blind King Bela of Hungary, invited them hither during the minority of her son, Geysa II. They appear to have come from Flanders, and from the neighbourhood of Cologne. They were tempted to this strange land by certain privileges and special rights secured to them by the rulers of Hungary, and faithfully preserved through many difficulties; as a fact the Saxons of Transylvania retained their self-government down to the middle of this century.

These people have played no unimportant part in

European history; for Herrmannstadt and Kronstadt, the sister towns of Saxon Transylvania, were called the bulwarks of Christianity all through the evil days of Moslem invasion. Herrmannstadt was called by the Turks the "Red Town" on account of the colour of its brick walls. It was besieged in 1438 with a force of 70,000 men headed by the Sultan Amurad himself, and great were the rejoicings amongst the brave burghers when it became known that an arrow directed from one of the towers had rid them of their foe! Trade and commerce must have prospered, by all accounts, in those days; and the burghers made themselves of importance, for King Andrew II., a man far in advance of his time, summoned them to assist in consultation at the Imperial Parliament. The wealth of Herrmannstadt is a thing of the past; the place has now the appearance of a dead level of competence, where riches and poverty are equally absent. There were no new houses building to supply an increasing population, nor, I should say, had any been built for many years.

The town is prettily situated on a slight elevation above the surrounding plain; it has the fine range of the Fogaraser Mountains as a background. The old moat, where Amurad fell pierced by the well-directed arrow, has been turned into a promenade; parts of the fortifications remain in a state of pictur-

esque ruin. Herrmannstadt is the seat of the Protestant Bishop of Transylvania, and there is a fine old church, which, however, has suffered severely in the process of restoration.

The interior of the church is in that unhappy condition which bespeaks the churchwarden's period — whitewash plastered over everything, obliterating lights and shades and rare carvings beneath a glare of uncouth cleanliness. In their desire to remove every object that could harbour dust or obstruct the besom of reform, they have bodily removed from the church many rich monuments and interesting effigies, and these are to be seen huddled away in an obscure corner of the churchyard. The church has a large collection of richly-embroidered vestments belonging to the pre-Reformation days.

Herrmannstadt is decidedly rich in collections. The Bruckenthal Library contains an illuminated missal of great beauty; the execution is singularly fine, and the designs very artistic. The curious thing is that the history of this rare volume is unknown; by some it is believed to have come from Bohemia during the time of the troubles in that country, however nothing is positively known. The book is of the finest vellum, containing 630 pages in small quarto. The pictures of architecture

and scenery are extremely interesting; the first represent buildings familiar to us in old German towns, and the rural scenes depict a variety of agricultural instruments, together with many details of home life in the olden time. The colours of the birds and flowers are as bright as if only finished yesterday. The ingenuity of the design is very striking; no two objects are alike. It would have taken hours to have looked over the volume thoroughly.

In the palace, of which the museum forms a part, there is a gallery of pictures, collected by the Baron Bruckenthal, formerly governor of Transylvania. The history of these pictures is very curious, they were mostly purchased from French refugees at the time of the first revolution. It appears that both at that period, and at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, many French families had sought an asylum in Hungary and Transylvania. In the Banat I am told there are two or three villages inhabited entirely by people who came originally from France; they retain only their Gallic names, having adopted the Magyar tongue and utterly lost their own. This little colony of the Banat belonged of course to the Huguenot exodus. I had now an opportunity of examining a collection of the Roman antiquities obtained from the Hatszeg Valley.

I remained several days at Herrmannstadt, principally for the sake of resting my horse, which unfortunately had been rubbed by the saddle-bags on my ride from Petrosèny. I spent the time agreeably enough, exploring the neighbourhood and making chance acquaintances. I bought here Bishop Teusch's 'History of Transylvanian Saxons,' a handy-book in two volumes. It interested me very much, especially reading it in the country itself where so many stirring scenes had been enacted.

Wishing to see some of the neighbouring villages, I set off one fine day on a walking expedition. I chose Sunday, because on that day one can see to best advantage the costume of the peasants. Hammersdorf is a pretty enough village, "fair with orchard lawns," but not so charming as Heltau, which, standing on high ground, commands an extensive view of the whole plain, with the old "Red Town" in the foreground of the picture. The church in this village is a very fine specimen of the fortified churches, which are a unique feature of the Transylvanian border-land. The origin of this form of architecture is very obvious; it was necessary to have a defence against the incursions of the Tartars and Turks, who for centuries troubled the peace of this fair land. In every village of the

Saxons in the south and east of Transylvania the church is also a fortified place, fitted to maintain a siege if necessary. The construction of these buildings varies according to circumstances: the general character is that the sacred edifice is surrounded, or forms part of a strong wall with its watch-towers; not unfrequently a second and even a third wall surround the place. In every case a considerable space of ground is enclosed around the church, sufficient to provide accommodation for the villagers; in fact every family with a house outside had a corresponding hut within the fortified walls. Here, too, was a granary, and some of the larger places had also their school-tower attached to the church. It happened not unfrequently that the villagers were obliged to remain for some weeks in their sanctuary.

Heltau is an industrious little place. Here is manufactured the peculiar white frieze so much worn by the Wallacks. Nearly every house has its loom, but I was told the trade is less flourishing than formerly. The woollen-cloth manufacturers of Transylvania have suffered very much from the introduction of foreign goods; but, on the other hand, if they would bestir themselves they might enormously increase their exports. Heltau is a market-place, and reserves many old privileges very

jealously. Its inhabitants were often in dispute with the burghers of Herrmannstadt, and on one occasion they had the audacity, in rebuilding their church-tower, to place four turrets upon it. Their neighbours regarded this with great indignation, for are not four turrets the sign and symbol of *civic* authority? The burghers of Herrmannstadt hereupon obliged the men of Heltau to sign a bond, saying that "they were but humble villagers," and promising to treat their haughty neighbours with all due "honour, fear, and friendship."

From Heltau I went on to Michaelsburg, an extremely curious place. In the centre of a lovely valley rises a conical rock of gneiss, protruding to the height of 200 feet or more. This is crowned by the ruins of a Romanesque church. There are, I believe, only two other specimens of this kind of architecture in the country. The time of the building of Michaelsburg is stated to be between 1173 and 1223. Before the use of artillery this fortified church on the rock must have been really impregnable. Inside the walls I found a quantity of large round stones—the shot and shell of those days; these stones were capable of making considerable havoc amongst a besieging party I should say. The custom was in the old time that no young man should be allowed to take unto himself

a wife till he had carried one such stone from the bed of the river where they are found, to the summit of the rock within the church walls. As these stones weigh between two and three hundredweight, and the ascent is very steep, it was a test of strength. The villagers were anxious to prevent the weaklings from marrying lest they should spoil the hardy race.

The view from the village itself is very pretty, home-like, and with a more familiar look about the vegetation than I had seen elsewhere. There were orchards of cherry-trees, and hedges, as in our west country, festooned with wild hops and dog-roses. Every girl I met was busily engaged plaiting straw as she walked. This straw is for hats of a particular kind for which the place is famed. Besides this industry, the people are great bee-keepers, and make a good trade by selling the honey. The produce of the hives in the Southern Carpathians is the very poetry of honey; it is perfectly delicious, not surpassed by that of Hymettus or Hybla, so famed in ancient story. This "mountain honey" sometimes reaches the London market, but, unfortunately, not with any regularity. It is most difficult to make these people practical in their trade dealings; and as for *time*, they must have come into the world before it was talked about.

I made a short excursion into the Rothen Thurm Pass, the principal road across the Southern Carpathians, if we except the Tomöscher Pass from Kronstadt, which, owing to local circumstances, has become more important. The Rothen Thurm or Red Tower Pass is extremely picturesque. It is traversed by the Aluta, which though rising in the Szeklerland in the north-east, finds its way through the Carpathian range, flowing at length into the Lower Danube. The red tower stands at the narrowest part of the defile, an important position of defence; and not far from this spot signal victory was gained by the Christians over the infidels. In the year 1493 the Turks made one of their frequent raids into Transylvania. They had succeeded in collecting a vast amount of booty, including many fair young maidens and tender youths, and were returning in long cavalcade through the Red Tower Pass. Here, however, they fell into an ambuscade arranged by the men of Herrmannstadt, headed by their burgomaster, the brave George Hecht. At a concerted signal the Saxons rushed upon the despoilers with such a fierce and sudden onslaught, that though the Turks far exceeded them in number, they were completely overpowered. Many a turbaned corpse lay that day on the green margin of the classical Aluta, and

few, very few, of the hated Turks, it is said, escaped over the frontier to tell the tale of their disaster. How many a home must have been gladdened by the sight of the rescued children after that happy victory!

These abductions are not altogether a thing of the past. In the autumn of 1875, the very date of my tour, a paragraph appeared in a Pest newspaper stating that a young girl of great beauty in the neighbourhood of Temesvar, in the Banat of Hungary, had been secretly carried off into Turkey without the knowledge or consent of her parents. It was further stated that these scandalous proceedings were of very frequent occurrence in the border provinces. For some years past the supply of beautiful Circassians has been deficient, it is said, so doubtless the harems of Constantinople are supplied with Christian maidens to make up the numbers. The late Sultan—I mean the one who committed suicide—was considered a moderate man, and he had eight hundred women in his harem, at least so a relative of mine was credibly informed at Constantinople.

CHAPTER XVII.

Magyar intolerance of the German—Patriotic revival of the Magyar language—Ride from Herrmannstadt to Kronstadt—The village of Zeiden—Curious scene in church—Reformation in Transylvania—Political bitterness between Saxons and Magyars in 1848.

My horse being all right again, I thought it high time to push on to Kronstadt, which is nearly ninety miles from Herrmannstadt by road. There is railway communication, but not direct; you have to get on the main line at the junction of Klein Köpisch—in Hungarian, Kis Kapus—and hence to Kronstadt, called Brasso by the non-Germans. This confusion of names is very difficult for a foreigner when consulting the railway tables. I have often seen the names of stations put up in three languages. Herrmannstadt is Nagy Szeben. The confusion of tongues in Hungary is one of the greatest stumbling-blocks to progress; and unfortunately it is considered patriotic by the Magyar to speak his own language and ignore that of his neighbour.

It happened to me once that I entered an inn in a Hungarian town, and addressing the waiter, I gave my orders in German, whereupon an elderly gentleman turned sharply upon me, saying—also in German, observe—"It is the custom to speak Hungarian here."

"I am not acquainted with the language, sir," I replied. "German is not to be spoken here—Hungarian or nothing," he retorted. I simply turned on my heel with a gesture of impatience. It was rather too much for any old fellow, however venerable and patriotic, to condemn me to silence and starvation because I could not speak the national lingo, so in the irritation of the moment I rapped out an English expletive, meant as an aside. Enough! No sooner did the testy old gentleman hear the familiar sound, invariably associated with the travelling Britisher in old days, than he turned to me with the utmost urbanity, saying in French, "Pardon a thousand times, I thought you were a German from the fluency of your speech; I had no idea you were an Englishman. Why did you not tell me at once? What orders shall I give for you? How can I help you?" It ended in our dining together and becoming the best friends; in fact he invited me to spend a week with him at his château in the neighbourhood. In the course of conversation I could not help asking

him why, as he spoke German himself and the people in the inn also understood it—in fact I am not sure but what it was their mother-tongue—why he would not allow the language to be spoken?

"We are Hungarians here," he replied, going off into testiness again, "and we do not want that cursed German spoken on all sides. I, for one, will move heaven and earth to get my own language used in my own country. Ha, ha! the Austrians wanted us to have their officials everywhere on the railway. We have put a stop to that; now every man-jack of them must speak Hungarian. It gave an immensity of trouble, and they did not like it at all, I can tell you."

I did not attempt to argue with the old gentleman, for his views were inextricably mixed up with feelings and patriotism.

As a matter of fact, in the early part of this century the Magyar language was hardly spoken by the upper classes except in communicating with their inferiors; but when the patriotic Count Stephen Széchenyi first roused his fellow-countrymen to nobler impulses and more enlightened views, he held forth the restoration of the national language as the first necessity of their position. In his time it meant breaking down the barrier which separated classes. He was the first in the Chamber of Magnates who

spoke in the tongue understood by the people; hitherto Latin had been the language of the Chambers. With the exception of a group of poets—Varósmazty, Petoefy, Kolcsey, and the brothers Kisfaludy—there were hardly any writers who employed their native language in literature or science. Count Széchenyi set the fashion, he wrote his political works in Hungarian, and what was more, assisted in establishing a national theatre.

There is perhaps no place where Shakespeare is so often given as at the Hungarian theatre at Buda-Pest, and it is said by competent judges that their translation of our great poet is unequalled in any language, German not excepted.

To a foreigner the Hungarian tongue appears very difficult, because of its isolated character and its striking difference from any other European language. In Cox's 'Travels in Sweden,' published in the last century, he mentions that Sainovits, a learned Jesuit, a native of Hungary, who had gone to Lapland to observe the transit of Venus in 1775, remarked that the Hungarian and Lapland idioms were the same; and he further stated that many words were identical. As a Turanian language, Hungarian has also an alliance with the Turkish as well as the Finnish; but there are only six and a half millions of Magyars who speak the language,

and by no possibility can it be adopted by any other peoples.

For their men of letters it is an undeniable misfortune to have so restricted a public; a translated work is never quite the same. The question of language must also limit the choice of professors in the higher schools and at the university. But political grievances are mixed up with the language question, and of those I will not speak now, while I am still in Saxonland, where they do not love the Magyar or anything belonging to him.

Returning to the itinerary of my route, I left Herrmannstadt very early one morning, getting to Fogaras by four o'clock; it was about forty-seven miles of good road. This little town is celebrated for the cultivation of tobacco. There is a large inn here, which looked promising from the outside, but that was all; it had no *inside* to speak of—no food, no stable-boy, nothing. After foraging about I got something to eat with great difficulty, and feeling much disgusted with my quarters, I sallied forth to find the clergyman of the place, to whom I introduced myself.

I spent the evening at his house, and found him a very jolly old fellow; he entertained me with a variety of good stories, some of them relating to the tobacco-smuggling. The peasants are allowed to

grow the precious weed on condition that they sell it all to the State at a fixed rate. Naturally, if they otherwise disposed of it, they would be able to make a much larger profit, as it is a monopoly of the State. They have a peculiar way of mystifying the exciseman as to the number of leaves on a string, for this is the regulation way of reckoning; besides which, wholesale smuggling goes on at times, and waggon-loads are got away. Occasionally there is a fight between the officials and the peasants.

I had intended getting on to Kronstadt the next day, but I stopped at the Saxon village of Zeiden. The clergyman, on hearing that there was a stranger in the place, hastened to the inn, where he found me calmly discussing my mid-day meal. He would not hear of my going on to Kronstadt, but kindly invited me to be his guest. I heard a great deal later of his unvarying hospitality to strangers.

The next day being Sunday, of course I went to church with my host. The congregation, including their pastor, wore the costume of the middle ages; it was a most curious and interesting sight. I am never a good hand at describing the details of dress, but I know my impression was that the pastor—wearing a ruff, I think, or something like it—might just have walked out of a picture, such as one knows so well of the old Puritans in Cromwell's

time. The dress of the peasants, though unlike the English fashion of any period, had an old-world look. The married women wore white kerchiefs twisted round the head, sleeveless jackets, with a mystery of lace adornments. The marriageable girls sat together in one part of the church, which I thought very funny; they wore drum-shaped hats poised on the head in a droll sort of way. Some of them had a kind of white leather pelisse beautifully wrought with embroidery. Each girl carried a large bouquet of flowers. These blue-eyed German maidens were many of them very pretty, and all were fresh looking and exquisitely neat. It was an impressive moment when the whole congregation joined in singing—

"*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott;*"

"the Marseillaise of the Reformation," as Heine calls Luther's hymn, "that defiant strain that up to our time has preserved its inspiring power."

The Reformation spread with wonderful rapidity throughout the length and breadth of Hungary, more especially in Transylvania. It appears that the merchants of Herrmannstadt, who were in the habit of attending the great fair at Leipsic, brought back Luther's writings, which had the effect of setting fire to men's minds. At one time more than half Hungary had declared for the new doc-

trines, but terrible persecutions thinned their ranks. According to the latest statistics there are 1,109,154 Lutherans and 2,024,332 Calvinists in Hungary. The Saxons of Transylvania belong almost exclusively to the Reformed faith; they had always preserved in a remarkable degree their love for civil and political freedom, hence their minds were prepared to receive Protestantism. Three monks from Silesia, converts to Luther's views, came into these parts to preach, passing from one village to another, and in the towns they "held catechisings and preachings in the public squares and market-places," where crowds came from all the country round to hear them. The peasants went back to their mountain homes with Bibles in their hands; and since that time the simple folk, through wars and persecutions, have held steadfast to their faith.

Herrmannstadt became a second Wittenberg: the new doctrine was not more powerful in the town where Luther lived. Several bishops joined the party of the seceders, and already the towns throughout Hungary had generally declared for the Reformation; in many the "Catholic priests were left, as shepherds without flocks."[1] When Popish ceremonies aroused the ridicule of the people, and

[1] See The History of Protestantism, by Rev. J. A. Wylie, Part 29.



when even in country districts the priests who came to demand their tithes were dismissed without their "fat ducks and geese," there was a general outcry against the new heresy. The Romish party knew their strength at the Court of Vienna. At the instigation of the Papal legate Cajetan, Louis II. issued the terrible edict of 1523, which ran as follows: "All Lutherans, and those who favour them, as well as all adherents to their sect, shall have their property confiscated and themselves be punished with death as heretics and foes of the most holy Virgin Mary."

While the monks were stirring up their partisans to have the Lutherans put to death, a national misfortune happened which saved Protestantism, at least in Transylvania. Soliman the Magnificent set out from Constantinople in the spring of 1526 with a mighty host, which came nearer and nearer to Hungary like the "wasting levin." King Louis lost his army and his life at the battle of Mohacks, leaving the Turks to pursue their way into the heart of the country, slaughtering upwards of 200,000 of its inhabitants. To this calamity, as we all know, succeeded an internal civil war, resulting from the rival claims of John Zapolya and the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria for the crown of Hungary. Transylvania took advantage of this

critical time to achieve her independence under Zapolya, consenting to pay tribute to the Porte on condition of *receiving assistance against the tyranny of Austria.* Thus it came about that the infidel Turks helped to preserve the Reformation in this part of Europe: they became the defenders of Protestant Transylvania against the tyranny of Roman Catholic Austria. "Sell what thou hast and depart into Transylvania, where thou wilt have liberty to profess the truth," were the words spoken by King Ferdinand himself to Stephen Szantai, a zealous preacher of the gospel in Upper Hungary, whom he desired to defend.

It is said that the first printing-press set up in Hungary was the gift of Count Nadasdy to Matthias Devay, who was devoted to the education of youth; and the first work that was issued from the press was a book for children, teaching the rudiments of the gospel in the language of the country. The same Protestant nobleman aided the publication in 1541 of an edition of the New Testament in the Magyar tongue. "It is a remarkable fact," says Mr Patterson,[1] "connected with the history of Protestantism, that all its converts were made within the pale of *Latin* Christianity. In the nationalities of Hungary there belonged to Latin

[1] The Magyars; their Country and Institutions.

Christianity the Magyars, the Slovacks, and the Germans."

In Transylvania the progress of Protestantism was secured. In 1553 the Diet declared in favour of the Reformation by a majority of votes, and while the province was governed by Petrovich, during the minority of Zapolya's infant son, he freed the whole of Transylvania from the jurisdiction of the Roman hierarchy.

When the Turks were finally expelled from Hungary by the second battle of Mohacks in 1686, Protestantism had grown strong enough in Transylvania to extract from the house of Hapsburg the celebrated *Diploma Leopoldium* (their Magna Charta), which secured to them religious liberty once and for ever.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Political difficulties—Impatient criticism of foreigners—Hungary has everything to do—Tenant-farmers wanted—Wages.

It is remarkable that the Saxons in Transylvania, who had suffered so much tribulation from the religious persecutions of the house of Hapsburg, preferring even to shelter themselves under the protection of the Turk, should be the first to support the tyranny of Austria against the Magyars in 1848.

I visited at the house of a village pastor, who told me he had himself led four hundred Saxons against the Hungarians at that time. The remembrance of that era is not yet effaced; so many people not much beyond middle age had taken part in the war that the bitterness has not passed out of the personal stage. Pacification and reconciliation, and all the Christian virtues, have been evoked; but underlying the calm surface, all the old hatreds of race still exist. Nothing assimilates socially or politically in Hungary. The troubled

history of the past reappears in the political difficulty of the present. And what can be done when the Magyar will not hold with the Saxon, and the Saxon cannot away with the Szekler? Are not the ever-increasing Wallacks getting numerically ahead of the rest, while the Southern Slavs threaten the integrity of the empire?

Prosperity is the best solvent for disaffection. When the resources of Hungary are properly developed, and wealth results to the many, bringing education and general enlightenment in its train, there will be a common ground of interest, even amongst those who differ in race, religion, and language. It was a saying of the patriotic Count Széchenyi, and the saying has passed into a proverb, "Make money, and enrich the country; an empty sack will topple over, but if you fill it, it will stand by its own weight."

"You call yourselves 'the English of the East,'" I said one day to a Hungarian friend of mine; "but how is it you are not more practical, since you pay us the compliment of following our lead in many things?"

"You do not see that in many respects we are children, the Hungarians are children," replied my friend. "'We are not, but we shall be,' said one of our patriots. You Britishers are rash in your

impatient criticism of a state which has not come to its full growth. It is hardly thirty years since we emerged from the middle ages, so to speak; and you expect our civilisation to have the well-worn polish of Western States. Think how recently we have emancipated our serfs, and reformed our constitution and our laws. Take into account, too, that just as we were setting our house in order, the enemy was at the gate—progress was arrested, and our national life paralysed; but let that pass, we don't want to look back, we want to look forward. We have still to build up the structure that with you is finished; we are deficient in everything that a state wants in these days, and in our haste to make railways, roads, and bridges, to erect public buildings, and to promote industrial enterprises, we make certain financial blunders. You must not forget that we in Hungary are much in the same state that you were in England in the thirteenth century, before tenant-holdings had become general. We shall gradually learn to see the advantages to be derived from letting land on your farm system. There is nothing we desire so much as the creation of the tenant-farmer class, which hardly exists yet. Large estates would be far better divided and let as farms on your system. We are in a transition state as regards many things

in agricultural matters. English or Scotch farmers would be welcomed over here by the great land-owners. Your countryman, Professor Wrightson, convinced himself of this when he was here in 1873. If they could command some capital, the produce of the land in many instances could be doubled."

I asked my friend about labourers' wages, but he said it was difficult to give any fixed rate. A mere agricultural day-labourer would get from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d.; sometimes the evil practice of paying wages in kind obtained—viz., a man receives so much Indian corn (*kukoricz*). And not unfrequently a peasant undertakes to plough the fields twice, to hoe them three times, and to see the crop housed, for which he receives the half of the yield provided he has furnished the seed. The peasants' own lands, as a rule, are very badly managed; their ploughing is shallow, and they do nothing or next to nothing in the way of drainage.

CHAPTER XIX.

Want of progress amongst the Saxons—The Burzenland—Kronstadt —Mixed character of its inhabitants—Szeklers—General Bem's campaign.

It was a glorious morning when I left the comfortable village of Zeiden. Before me were the rich pastures of the Burzenland, a tract which tradition says was once filled up by the waters of a great lake, till some Saxon hero hewed a passage through the mountains in the Geisterwald for the river Aluta, thus draining this fertile region.

The mountainous wall to the rear of Zeiden is clothed by magnificent hanging woods, which at the time I describe were just tinged with the first rich touches of autumn. It was a lovely ride through this fertile vale. On every side I saw myself surrounded by the lofty Carpathians, or the lesser spurs of that grand range of mountains; the higher peaks to the south and south-east were already capped with snow. The village in which I had so agreeably sojourned for a couple of days almost rises to the dignity of a little town, for it has nearly

4000 inhabitants. Considering its situation, on the verge of this rich plain, and many other local circumstances, it is, I suppose, a very favourable example of a German settlement in Transylvania. I had been struck by the extreme neatness of the dwellings and the generally well-to-do air of the people, but there is nothing progressive about these Saxons. I saw plainly that what their fathers did before them they do themselves, and expect their sons to follow in the same groove. There is amongst them generally a dead level of content incomprehensible to a restless Englishman.

When I asked why they did not try to turn this or that natural advantage to account, I was met with the reply, "Our fathers have done very well without it, why should not we?" I could never discover any inclination amongst the Saxons to initiate any fresh commercial enterprise either at home or abroad, nor would they respond with any interest to the most tempting suggestions as to ways and means of increasing their possessions. It is all very well to draw the moral picture of a contented people. Contentment under some circumstances is the first stage of rottenness. The inevitable law of change works the deterioration of a race which does not progress. This fact admits of practical proof here. For instance, the cloth manufactures of Transylvania

are falling into decay, and there is nothing else of an industrial kind substituted. The result is a decrease of the general prosperity, and a marked diminution in the population of the towns. Nor is this the case in populous places only. The Saxon villager desires to transmit the small estate he derived from his father intact to his *only* son. He does not desire a large family; it would tax his energies too much to provide for that. It is deeply to be lamented that a superior race like the educated Saxons of Transylvania, who held their own so bravely against Turk and Tartar, and, what was more difficult still, preserved their religious liberty in spite of Austrian Jesuits, should *now* be losing their political ascendancy, owing mainly to their displacement by the Wallacks. According to the last census, the German immigrants in Hungary are estimated at 1,820,922. I have no means of making an accurate comparison, but I hear on all hands that the numbers are diminished. There are, besides, proofs of it in the case of villages which were exclusively Saxon having now become partly, even wholly, Wallachian.

There are wonderfully few châteaux in this picturesque land. In my frequent rides over the Burzenland I rarely saw any dwellings above what we should attribute to a yeoman farmer. As a

matter of fact there are fewer aristocrats in this part of Hungary, or perhaps I should say this part of Transylvania, than in any other.

After my pleasant morning's ride I found myself at Kronstadt, and put up at Hotel "No. 1"—an odd name for a fairly good inn. There is another farther in town—the Hotel Bucharest—also a place of some pretension. The charges for rooms generally in the country are out of all proportion to the accommodation given. Travellers are rare, at least they used to be before the present war; but Kronstadt is the terminus of the direct railway from Buda-Pest, which, communicating with the Tomöscher Pass over the Carpathians, is the shortest route to Bucharest.

As far as the buildings are concerned, Kronstadt has much the air of an old-fashioned German town. As you pass along the streets you get a peep now and then of picturesque interior courtyards, seen through the wide-arched doorways. These courts are mostly surrounded by an open arcade. Generally in the centre of each is set a large green tub holding an oleander-tree. This gives rather an Oriental appearance to these interiors. The East and West are here mixed up together most curiously. Amongst the fair-haired, blue-eyed Saxons are dusky Armenians and black-ringleted Jews, wearing strange garments. By the way, the

merchants of these two races have ousted the Saxon trader from the field; commerce is almost completely in their hands.

The market-day at Kronstadt is a most curious and interesting sight. The country-people come in, sitting in their long waggons, drawn by four horses abreast, they themselves dressed in cloaks of snow-white sheepskins, or richly-embroidered white leather coats lined with black fur. The head-gear too is very comely, and very dissimilar; for there are flat fur caps—like an exaggerated Glengarry—and peaked hats, and drum-shaped hats for the girls, while the close-twisted white kerchief denotes the matron. The Wallack maiden is adorned by her dowry of coins hanging over head and shoulders, and with braids of plaited black hair—mingled, I am afraid, with tow, if the truth must be spoken.

Kronstadt is rather a considerable place; the population is stated to be 27,766, composed of Saxons, Szeklers, and Wallacks, who have each their separate quarter. It is most beautifully situated, quite amongst the mountains; in fact it is 2000 feet above the sea-level. The Saxon part of the town is built in the opening of a richly-wooded valley. The approach from the vale beyond—the Burzenland, of which I have spoken before—is guarded by a singular isolated rock, a spur of the mountain-chain. This

natural defence is crowned by a fortress, which forms a very picturesque feature in the landscape. Formerly the town was completely surrounded by walls, curtained on the hillside, reminding one of Lucern's "coronal of towers." In the "brave days of old" the trade-guilds were severally allotted their forts for the defence of the town—no holiday task for volunteers, as in our "right little, tight little island."

Though the dangers of the frontier are by no means a thing of the past, the town walls and the towers are mainly in ruins, overgrown with wild vines and other luxuriant vegetation. As no guide-book exists to tell one what one ought to see, and where one ought to go, I had all the pleasure of poking about and coming upon surprises. I was not aware that the church at Kronstadt is about the finest specimen of fourteenth-century Gothic in Transylvania, ranking second only to the Cathedral of Kashau in Upper Hungary.

My first walk was to the Kapellenburg, a hill which rises abruptly from the very walls of the town. An hour's climb through a shady zigzag brought me to the summit. From thence I could see the "seven villages" which, according to some persons, gave the German name to the province, Siebenbürgen, "seven towns." The level Burzen-

land looked almost like a green lake; beyond it the chain of the Carpathian takes a bend, forming the frontier of Roumania. The highest point seen from thence is the Schülerberg, upwards of 8000 feet, and a little farther off the Königstein, and the Butschrtsch, the latter reaching 9526 feet. Hardly less picturesque is the view from the Castle Hill. Quite separated from the rest of the town is the quarter inhabited by the Szeklers. This people constitute one of four principal races inhabiting Transylvania. They are of Turanian origin, like the Magyars, but apparently an older branch of the family. When the Magyars overran Pannonia in the tenth century, under the headship of the great Arpad, they appear to have found the Szeklers already in possession of part of the vast Carpathian horseshoe—that part known to us as the Transylvanian frontier of Moldavia. They claim to have come hither as early as the fourth century. It is known that an earlier wave of the Turanians had swept over Europe before the incoming of the Magyars, and the so-called Szeklers were probably a tribe or remnant of this invasion, the date of which, however, is wrapped in no little obscurity.

This is certain, that they have preserved their independence throughout all these ages in a very remarkable manner. "They are all 'noble,'" says Mr

Boner, "and proudly and steadfastly adhere to and uphold their old rights and privileges, such as right of hunting and of pasture. They had their own judges, and acknowledged the authority of none beside. Like their ancestors the Huns, they loved fighting, and were the best soldiers that Bem had in his army. They guarded the frontier, and guarded it well, of their own free-will; but they would not be compelled to do so, and the very circumstance that Austria, when the border system was established, obliged them to furnish a contingent of one infantry and two hussar regiments sufficed to alienate their regard."[1] In another place Mr Boner says, "The Szekler soldier, I was told, was 'excessive,' which means extreme, in all he did."

In the view of recent events, it may be worth while to recall to mind a few particulars of General Bem's campaign in Transylvania. In no part of Hungary was the war of independence waged with so much bitterness as down here on these borderlands. The Saxons and the Wallacks were bitterly opposed to the Magyars; and on the 12th of May, in the eventful '48, a popular meeting was held at Kronstadt, where they protested vehemently against union with Hungary, and swore allegiance to the Emperor of Austria. Upon this the Szeklers

[1] Boner's Transylvania, p. 624.

flew to arms—on the side of the Magyars, of course; throughout their history they have always made common cause with them. In the autumn of the same year, Joseph Bem, a native of Galicia, who had fought under Marshal Davoust, later with Macdonald at the siege of Hamburg, and had also taken part in the Polish insurrection of 1830, attached himself to the Hungarian cause. He had formed a body of troops from the wrecks and remnants of other corps, and soon by his admirable tactics succeeded on two occasions in beating the Austrians at the very outset of his campaign; the latter of these victories was near Dées, to the north of Klausenburg, where he defeated General Wardener. The winter of that terrible year wore on. In Transylvania it was not merely keeping back the common enemy, the invader of the soil, but it was a case where the foes were of the same township, and the nearest neighbours confronted each other on opposite ranks.

The Austrians meanwhile had called in the Russians to aid them in crushing the Hungarians; and at the time it was believed that the Saxons of Transylvania had instigated this measure. It is easy to understand how the Russians would be hated along with their allies; it was a desperate struggle, and well fought out by Magyars and

Szeklers, ably handled by General Bem. Herrmanustadt and Kronstadt both fell into his hands, after a vigorous defence by the Austro-Russian garrisons; in fact, by the middle of March '49, the whole of Transylvania, with the exception of Karlsburg and Dèva, was held by the troops of this fortunate general. But, as we all know, the Hungarian arms were not so successful elsewhere, and the end of that struggle was approaching, which was to find its saddest hour at Villagos on the 13th of August, when the Hungarians were cajoled into laying down their arms before the Russians!

The rest of the miserable story had better not be dwelt upon. Much has changed in these few years. Now a Hapsburg recognises the privilege of mercy amongst his kingly attributes. The last words of Maximilian, the ill-fated Emperor of Mexico, were, "Let my blood be the last shed as an offering for my country." Since then capital punishment has become of rare occurrence in Austria; and remembering his brother's death, the Emperor, it is said, can hardly be induced to sign a death-warrant!

CHAPTER XX.

The Tomöscher Pass—Projected railway from Kronstadt to Bucharest—Visit to the cavalry barracks at Rosenau—Terzburg Pass—Dr Daubeny on the extinct volcanoes of Hungary—Professor Judd on mineral deposits.

KRONSTADT is a capital place as headquarters for any one who desires to explore the neighbouring country. One of my first expeditions was to Sinia, a small bath-place in the Tomöscher Pass, just over the borders—in fact in Roumania. Here Prince Charles has a charming château, and there are besides several ambitious Swiss cottages belonging to the wealthy grandees of Roumania. My object was not so much to see the little place, as it was to explore this pass of the Carpathians, now so familiar to newspaper correspondents and others since the Russo-Turkish war began.

As I mentioned before, a railway is projected from Kronstadt through this pass, which will meet the Lemberg and Bucharest line at Ployesti, that station being less than two hours from the Roumanian capital. Up to the present hour not a sod of this

railway has been turned; but curiously enough, with only two or three exceptions, all the "war maps" have made the capital mistake of marking it down as a *completed* line. In the autumn of 1875, when I was there, the levels had been taken and the course marked down; if it is ever really carried out, it will be one of the most beautiful railway drives in Europe. It is a most important link in the railway system of Eastern Europe. The Danube route is frequently, indeed periodically, closed by the winter's ice, and sometimes by the drought of summer, in which case the traveller who wants to get to Roumania must take the train from Buda-Pest to Kronstadt, and thence by road through the Tomöscher Pass to Ployesti.

There is a diligence service twice daily, occupying fourteen hours or thereabouts, dependent, of course, on the state of the roads, which can be very bad—inconceivably bad. For the sake of the excursion I took a place in the *postwagen* one day as far as Sinia, where there is a modern hotel and very tolerable quarters. The scenery of the pass is very romantic. In places the road winds round the face of the precipice, and far below is a deep sunless glen, through which the mountain torrent rushes noisily over its rocky bed; at other times you skirt the stream with its green margin of meadow—a

pastoral oasis amidst the wild grandeur of bare limestone peaks and snowy summits. The autumnal colouring on the hanging woods of oak and beech was something more brilliant than I ever remember to have seen; the effect of being oneself in shadow and seeing the glory of the sunlight on the foliage of the other side of the defile, was most striking. Above this ruby mountain rose other heights with a girdle of dark fir, and higher still were visible yet loftier peaks, clothed in the dazzling whiteness of fresh-fallen snow. In the Southern Carpathians there is no region of perpetual snow, but the higher summits are generally snow-clad late in the spring and very early in the autumn. I was told there is good bear-hunting in this district.

While at Kronstadt I made the acquaintance of some Austrian officers quartered in the neighbourhood. They kindly invited me to the cavalry barracks at Rosenau, and accordingly I went over for a few days. The barracks were built by the people of the village, or rather small town, of Rosenau; for they were obliged by law to quarter the military, and to avoid the inconvenience of having soldiers billeted upon them they constructed a suitable building. The cavalry horses were nearly all in a bad plight when I was there, for they had an epidemic of influenza amongst them; but we

found a couple of nags to scramble about with, and made some pleasant excursions. One of our rides was to a place called "The Desolate Path," a singularly wild bit of scenery, and curiously in contrast to the rich fertility of Rosenau and its immediate neighbourhood. This pretty little market town lies at the foot of a hill, which is crowned with a romantic ruin, one of the seven burgher fortresses built by the Saxon immigrants. There is a remarkably pretty walk from the village to the "Odenweg," a romantic ravine, with beautiful hanging woods and castellated rocks disposed about in every sort of fantastic form. It reminded me somewhat of some parts of the Odenwald near Heidelberg. Very likely the wild and mysterious character of the spot led the German settlers to associate with it the name of Oden.

We also rode over the Terzburg Pass. The picturesque castle which gives its name to this pass is situated on an isolated rock, admirably calculated for defence in the old days. It belonged once upon a time to the Teutonic Knights, who held it on condition of defending the frontier; but they became so intolerable to the burghers of Kronstadt, that these informed their sovereign that they preferred being their own defenders, and thus the castle and nine villages were given over to the town.

The Germans who had left their own Rhine country for the sake of getting away from the robber knights were not anxious for that special mediæval institution to accompany them in their flitting, we may be sure. The democratic character of the laws and customs of the Germans of Transylvania is a very curious and interesting study; in not a few instances these people have anticipated by some centuries the liberal ideas of Western Europe in our own day.

After returning from the visit to my military friends at Rosenau, I was told I must not omit to make some excursions to the celebrated mineral watering-places of Transylvania. The chief baths in this locality are Elopatak and Tusnad. The first named is four hours' drive from Kronstadt. The waters contain a great deal of protoxide of iron, stronger even than those of Schwalbach, which they resemble. Tusnad, I was told, is pleasantly situated on the river Aluta, an excellent stream for fishing. The post goes daily in eight hours from Kronstadt. The season is very short, being over in August. Tusnad is said to contain one hundred springs of different kinds of water. I am not a water-totaller, so I did not taste all of them when I visited the place later on; but undoubtedly alum, iodine, and iron do severally impregnate the various springs.



I remembered reading long ago Dr Daubeny's work on "Volcanoes," in which he says that Hungary is one of the most remarkable countries in Europe for the scale on which volcanic operation has taken place. There are, it is stated, seven well-marked mountain groups of volcanic rocks, and two of these are in Transylvania. The most interesting in many respects is the chain of hills separating Szeklerland from Transylvania Proper. It is within this district that most of the mineral springs are found.

These volcanic rocks are of undoubted Tertiary origin, say the geologists. The whole range is for the most part composed of various kinds of trachytic conglomerate. "From the midst of these vast tufaceous deposits, the tops of the hills, composed of trachyte, a rock which forms all the loftiest eminences, here and there emerge. . . . The trachyte is ordinarily reddish, greyish, or blackish; it mostly contains mica. In the southern parts, as near Csik Szereda, the trachyte encloses large masses, sometimes forming even small hillocks, of that variety of which millstones are made, having quartz crystals disseminated through it, and in general indurated by silicious matter in so fine a state of division that the parts are nearly invisible. The latter substance seems to be the result of a

kind of sublimation which took place at the moment of the formation of the trachyte. . . . Distinct craters are only seen at the southern extremity of the chain. One of the finest observed by Dr Boné was to the south of Tusnad. It was of great size and well characterised, surrounded by pretty steep and lofty hills composed of trachyte. The bottom of the hollow was full of water. The ground near has a very strong sulphureous odour. A mile to the SSE. direction from this point there are on the tableland two large and distinct *maars* like those of the Eifel—that is to say, old craters, which have been lakes, and are now covered with a thick coat of marsh plants. The cattle dare not graze upon them for fear of sinking in. Some miles farther in the same direction is the well-known hill of Budoshegy (or hill of bad smell), a trachytic mountain, near the summit of which is a distinct rent, exhaling very hot sulphureous vapours. . . . The craters here described have thrown out a vast quantity of pumice, which now forms a deposit of greater or less thickness along the Aluta and the Marosch from Tusnad to Toplitza. Impressions of plants and some silicious wood are likewise to be found in it."[1]

Since Dr Daubeny's time there have been many

[1] A Description of Active and Extinct Volcanoes, by C. Daubeny, p. 133. 1848.

observers over the same ground, the most distinguished being the Hungarian geologist Szabó, professor at the University of Buda-Pest. A countryman of our own has also taken up the subject of the ancient volcanoes of Hungary, and has recently published a paper on the subject. Professor Judd has confined his remarks principally to the Schemnitz district in the north of Hungary. But the following passage refers to the general character of the formation. Professor Judd says:[1] "The most interesting fact with regard to the constitution of these Hungarian lavas, which in the central parts of their masses are often found to assume a very coarsely crystalline and almost granitic character, while their outer portions present a strikingly scoriaceous or slaggy appearance, remains to be noticed. It is, that though the predominant felspar in them is always of the basic type, yet they not unfrequently contain *free quartz*, sometimes in very large proportion. This free quartz is in some cases found to constitute large irregular crystalline grains in the mass, just like those of the ordinary orthoclase quartz-trachytes; but at other times its presence can only be detected by the microscope in thin sections. These quartz-

[1] 'On the Ancient Volcano of the District of Schemnitz, Hungary,' Quarterly Journal, Geo. Soc., August 1876.

iferous andesites were by Stache, who first clearly pointed out their true character, styled 'Dacites,' from the circumstance of their prevalence in Transylvania (the ancient Dacia)."

In concluding this highly instructive and interesting memoir of the volcanic rocks of Hungary, Professor Judd says: "The mineral veins of Hungary and Transylvania, with their rich deposits of gold and silver, cannot be of older date than the Miocene, while some of them are certainly more recent than the Pliocene. Hence these deposits of ore must all have been formed at a later period than the clays and sands on which London stands; while in some cases they appear to be of even younger date than the gravelly beds of our crags!"

For any one who desires to geologise in Hungary and Transylvania there is abundant assistance to be obtained in the maps which have been issued by the Imperial Geological Institute of Vienna, under the successive direction of Haidinger and Von Hauer. "These are geologically-coloured copies of the whole of the 165 sheets of the military map of the empire; and these have been accompanied by most valuable memoirs on the different districts, published in the well-known 'Jahrbuch' of the Institute. Franz von Hauer has further completed a reduction of these large-scale maps to a general map consisting

of twelve sheets, with a memoir descriptive of each, and has finally in his most valuable and useful work, 'Die Geologie und ihre Anwendung auf die Kenntniss der Bodenbeschaffenheit der Osterr-ungar. Monarchie,' which is accompanied by a single-sheet map of the whole country, summarised in a most able manner the entire mass of information hitherto obtained concerning the geology of the empire."

I have given this passage from Mr Judd's paper because there exists a good deal of misapprehension amongst English travellers as to what has really been done with regard to the geological survey of Austro-Hungary.

CHAPTER XXI.

A ride through Szeklerland—Warnings about robbers—Büksad—A look at the sulphur deposits on Mount Büdos—A lonely lake—An invitation to Tusnad.

FEELING curious not only about the geology of the Szeklerland, but interested also in the inhabitants, I resolved to pursue my journey by going through what is called the Csik. I made all my arrangements to start, but wet weather set in, and I remained against my inclination at Kronstadt, for I was impatient now to be moving onwards.

When I was in Hungary Proper they told me that travelling in Transylvania was very dangerous, and that it was a mad notion to think of going about there alone. Now that I was in Transylvania, I was amused at finding myself most seriously warned against the risk of riding alone through the Szeklerland. Every one told some fresh story of the insecurity of the roads. Curiously enough, foreigners get off better than the natives themselves; people of indifferent honesty have been known to say, "One

would not rob a stranger." It happened to me that one day when riding along—in this very Szekler-land of ill-repute—I dropped my Scotch plaid, and did not discover my loss till I arrived at the next village, where I was going to sleep. I was much vexed, not thinking for a moment that I should ever see my useful plaid again. However, before the evening was over, a peasant brought it into the inn, saying he had found it on the road, and it must belong to the Englishman who was travelling about the country. The finder would not accept any reward!

There was a fair in the town the day I left Kronstadt. The field where it is held is right opposite Hotel "No. 1," and the whole place was crowded with country-folks in quaint costumes — spruce, gaily-dressed people mixed up with Wallack cattle-drivers and other picturesque rascals, such as gipsies and Jews, and here and there a Turk, and, more ragged than all, a sprinkling of refugee Bulgarians. Though it was a scene of strange incongruities—a very jumble of races—yet it was by no means a crowd of roughs; on the contrary, the well-dressed, well-to-do element prevailed. The thrifty Saxon was very much there, intent on making a good bargain; the neatly-dressed Szekler walked about holding his head on his shoulders

with an air of resolute self-respect—they are unmistakable, are these proud rustics. Many a fair-haired Saxon maiden too tripped along, eyeing askance the peculiar "get-up" of the Englishman as he was about to mount his noble steed and ride forth into the wilds. If I was amused by the crowd, I believe the crowd was greatly amused at my proceedings. Mine own familiar friend, I verily believe, would have passed me by on the other side, I cut so queer a figure. As usual on these occasions, I had sent forward my portmanteau, this time to Maros Vásárhely; but everything else I possessed I carried round about me and my horse somehow, and I am not a man "who wants but little here below."

Besides my *toilette de voyage*, I had my cooking apparatus, a small jar of Liebig's meat, and some compressed tea, and other little odds and ends of comforts. I had also provided myself with some bacon and *slivovitz* for barter, a couple of bottles of the spirit being turned into a big flask slung alongside of my lesser flask for wine. Nor was this all, for having duly secured my saddle-bags, I had the plaid and mackintosh rolled up neatly and strapped in front of the saddle; then my gun, field-glass, and roll of three maps were slung across my shoulders. *Nota bene* my pockets were full to

repletion. In my leathern belt was stuck a revolver, handy, and a bowie-knife not far off.

But the portrait of this Englishman as he appeared to the Kronstadt people on that day is not yet complete. His legs were encased in Hessian boots; his shooting-jacket was somewhat the worse for wear; and his hat, which had been eminently respectable at first starting, had acquired a sort of brigandish air; and to add to the drollery of his general appearance, the excellent little Servian horse he rode was not high enough for a man of his inches.

With my weapons of offence and defence I must have appeared a "caution" to robbers, and it seems that the business of the fair was suspended to witness my departure. I was profoundly unconscious at the time of the public interest taken in my humble self, but later I heard a very humorous account of the whole proceeding from some relatives who visited Kronstadt about three weeks afterwards. I believe I am held in remembrance in the town as a typical Englishman!

Well, to take up the thread of my narrative—like Don Quixote, "I travelled *all* that day." If any reader can remember Gustave Doré's illustration of the good knight on that occasion, he will have some idea of how the sky looked on this very ride of

mine. As evening approached, the settled grey clouds, which had hung overhead like a pall all the afternoon, were driven about by a rough wind, which went on rising steadily. The grim phantom-haunted clouds came closer and closer round about me as darkness grew apace, and now and then the gust brought with it a vicious "spate" of rain. With no immediate prospect of shelter, my position became less and less lively. I had not bargained for a night on the highroad, or lodgings in a dry ditch or under a tree. Indeed those luxuries were not at hand; for trees there were none bordering the road, or in the open fields which stretched away on either side; and as for a *dry* ditch, I heard the streams gurgling along the watercourses, which were full to overflowing, as well they might be, seeing that it had rained for three days.

My object was to reach the village of Büksad, but where was Büksad now in reference to myself? I had no idea it was such a devil of a way off when I started. I had foolishly omitted to consult the map for myself, and had just relied on what I was told, though I might have remembered how loosely country-people all the world over speak of time and space.

When at length the darkness had become perplexing—*entre chien et loup*, as the saying is—I

met a peasant with a fierce-looking sheep-dog by his side. The brute barked savagely round me as if he meant mischief, and I soon told the peasant if he did not call off his dog directly I would shoot him. He called his dog back, which proved he understood German, so I then asked if I was anywhere near Büksad. To my dismay he informed me that it was a long way off; how long he would not say, for without further parley he strode on, and he and his dog were soon lost to view in the thick misty darkness.

Not a furlong farther, I came suddenly upon a house by the roadside, and a man coming out of the door with a light at the same moment enabled me to see "Vendéglo" on a small signboard. Good-luck: here, then, was an inn, where at least shelter was possible; and shelter was much to be desired, seeing that the rain was now a steady downpour. On making inquiries, I found that I was already in Büksad. The peasant had played off a joke at my expense, or perhaps dealt me a Roland for an Oliver, for threatening to shoot his dog. A *paprika handl* was soon prepared for me. In all parts of the country where travellers are possible, the invariable reply to a demand for something to eat is the query, "Would the gentleman like *paprika handl?*" and he had better like it, for his

chances are small of getting anything else. While I was seeing after my horse, the woman of the inn caught a miserable chicken, which I am sure could have had nothing to regret in this life; and in a marvellously short time the bird was stewed in red pepper, and called *paprika handl.*

I was aware that Count M—— owned a good deal of property in the neighbourhood of Büksad, and as I had a letter of introduction to his bailiff, I set off the next morning to find him. My object in coming to this particular part of the country was principally to explore that curious place Mount Büdos, mentioned by Dr Daubeny and others. I wanted to see for myself what amount of sulphur deposits were really to be found there. Count M——'s bailiff was very ready to be obliging, and he provided me with a guide, and further provided the guide with a horse, so that I had no difficulty in arranging an expedition to the mount of evil smell.

Having arranged the commissariat as usual, I started one fine morning with my guide. We rode for about two hours through a forest of majestic beech-trees, and then came almost suddenly, without any preparation, upon a beautiful mountain lake, called St Anna's Lake. It lies in a hollow; the hills around, forming cup-like sides, are clothed

with thick woods down to its very edge. Looking down from above, I saw the green reflection of the foliage penetrating the pellucid water till it met the other heaven reflected below. The effect was very singular, and gave one the idea of a lovely bit of world and sky turned upside down; it produced, moreover, a sort of fascination, as if one must dive down into its luring depths. No human sight or sound disturbed the weird beauty of this lonely spot. I longed at last to break the oppressive silence, and I fired off my revolver. This brought down a perfect volley of echoes, and at the same time, from the highest crags, out flew some half-dozen vultures; they wheeled round for a few moments, then disappeared behind the nearest crest of wood.

My guide soon set about making a fire; and while dinner was being cooked, I bethought me I would have a bath. I took a header from a projecting rock, but I very soon made the best of my way out of the water again. It was icy cold; I hardly ever recollect feeling any water so cold—I suppose because the lake is so much in shadow. After the meal we pushed on to Büdos, another two hours of riding; this time through a forest so dense that we could scarcely make our way. At last we reached a path, and this brought us before long to a roughly-constructed log-hut. This, I was

told, was the "summer hotel." Further on there were a few more log-huts, the "dependence" of the hotel itself. The bathing season was over, so hosts and guests had alike departed. This must be "roughing it" with a vengeance, I should say; but my guide told me that very "high-born" people came here to be cured.

It is a favourite place, too, for some who desire the last cure of all for life's ills; a single breath of the gaseous exhalations is death. One cleft in the hill is called the "Murderer;" so fatal are the fumes that even birds flying over it are often known to drop dead! The elevation of Mount Büdos is only 3800 feet; there are several caves immediately below the highest point. The principal cave is ten feet high and forty feet long, the interior being lower than the opening. A mixture of gases is exhaled, which, being heavier than the atmosphere, fills it up to the level of the entrance; and when the sun is shining into the cave, one can see the gaseous fumes swaying to and fro, owing to the difference of refraction.

I experienced a sensation which has often been noticed here before. On entering the cave, and standing for some minutes immersed in the gas, but with my head above it, I had the feeling of warmth pervading the lower limbs. I might have believed

myself to be in a warm bath up to the chest. This is a delusion, however, for the gaseous exhalation is pronounced by experimenters to be cooler, if anything, than the air; I suppose they mean the air of an ordinary summer day. The walls of the cave are covered with a deposit of sulphur, and at the extreme end drops of liquid are continually falling. This moisture is esteemed very highly for disease of the eyes; it is collected by the peasants. The gas-baths are resorted to by persons suffering from gout or rheumatism. They are taken in this manner: The patient wears a loose dress over nothing else, and arriving at the mouth of the cave, he must take one long breath. Instantly he runs into the dread cavern, remaining only as long as he can hold his breath; he then rushes back again. One single inhalation, and he would be as dead as a door-nail! How the halt and lame folk manage I don't know, but my guide was eloquent about the wonderful cures that are made here every year.

There are a variety of mineral springs in different parts of the mountain. At the source some have the appearance of boiling, from the quantity of carbonic acid gas given off; but it is only in appearance, for the water is very cold.

The springs which yield iron and carbonic acid

are much used for drinking. There are also some primitive arrangements for bathing near by. A square hole is cut in the ground; this is boarded round, and a simple wooden shed, like a gigantic dish-cover, is put over it. Here again my guide said that miraculous cures are wrought annually. It is a wonder that anybody is left with an ache or a pain in a country which has such wonderful waters. I think my guide thought I was a doctor, who was searching for a new health-resort, and he was quite ready to do his share of the puffing.

On Mount Büdos itself, in other parts than the cave, there occurs a good deal of sulphur; specimens are often found distributed which are very rich indeed. The place certainly deserves a thorough exploration, with a view to utilising the sulphur deposits; but it is so overgrown with vegetation that the search would involve considerable trouble and expense.

There is a fine view from Mount Büdos towards Moldavia. I was fortunate in having good lights and shades, and therefore enjoyed the prospect most thoroughly. I should like to have remained longer on the summit, but not being prepared for camping out it was not possible; so very reluctantly we set about returning.

My guide led me back to Büksad by another

route, a rough road, with deep ruts and big stones that must make driving in any vehicle, except for the honour and glory of it, a very doubtful blessing. But bad roads never do seem to matter in Hungary. Everybody drives everywhere; they would drive over a glacier if they had one. Occasionally we came upon some charming bits of forest scenery. The trees were grand, especially the beech; they were of greater girth than any I had yet seen in Transylvania. I noticed many mineral springs by the roadside; one could distinguish them by the deposit of oxide of iron on the stones near by.

When I got back to Büksad, I found the bailiff waiting to tell me that Count M—— and Baron A—— desired their compliments, and would be pleased to see me at Tusnad, if I would go over there. I had no introduction to these noblemen, and mention the invitation as an instance of Hungarian hospitality. They had simply heard that an Englishman was travelling about the country.

I rode over to Tusnad the following day, and found it, as I had been led to expect, a very picturesque little place, a number of Swiss cottages dropped down in the clearing of the forest, with a good "restauration," built by Count M—— himself. When I was there the season

was over; but I am told that it is full of fashionables in June and July, and that the waters have an increasing reputation. My attention was drawn to the singular fact of two springs bubbling up within six feet of each other, which are proved by chemical analysis to be distinctly different in composition. I fancy Count M—— was much amused at the fact of an English gentleman travelling about alone on horseback, without any servants or other impedimenta. I remember a friend of mine telling me that once in Italy, when he declined to hire a carriage from a peasant at a perfectly exorbitant price, and said he preferred walking, the fellow called after him, saying, "We all know you English are mad enough for anything!"

I don't know whether the Hungarian Count drew the same conclusion in my case, but I could see he was very much amused; I don't think any other people understand the Englishman's love of adventure.

CHAPTER XXII.

The baths of Tusnad—The state of affairs before 1848—Inequality of taxation—Reform—The existing land laws—Communal property—Complete registration of titles to estates—Question of entail.

I MIXED exclusively in Hungarian society during my stay at the baths of Tusnad. With Baron —— and Herr von —— I talked politics by the hour. The Hungarians have the natural gift of eloquence. They pour forth their words like the waters of a mill-race, no matter in what language. My principal companion at Tusnad spoke French. The true Magyar will always employ that language in preference to German when speaking with a foreigner; but as often as not the Hungarians of good society speak English perfectly well. The younger generation, almost without exception, understand our language, and are extremely well read in English literature.

I had so recently left Saxonland, where public opinion is opposed to everything that has the faintest shade of Magyarism, that I felt in the

state of Victor Hugo's hero, of whom he said, "Son orientation était changée, ce qui avait été le couchant était le levant. Il s'était retourné." The transition was certainly curious, but I confess to getting rather tired of the mutual recriminations of political parties; respecting each other's good qualities, they are simply colour-blind.

After the Saxons had been allowed to drop out of the conversation, I led my Magyar friend to talk of the state of things before 1848, and to enlighten me as to the existing condition of laws of property. My Hungarian—who, by the way, is a man well qualified to speak about legal matters—showered down upon me a perfect avalanche of facts. Leaving out a few patriotic flashes, the substance of what he told me was much as follows. I had especially asked about the recent legislation on the land question.

"In the old time, before '48, the State, the Church, and the Nobles were the *sole* landowners. The holding of land was strictly prohibited to all who were not noble; but to the peasants were allotted certain tracts, called for distinction 'session-lands.' For this privilege the peasant had to give up a tenth part of the produce to the lord, and besides he had to work for him two, and in some cases even *three*, days in the week. The

robot, or forced labour, varied in different localities. The lord was judge over his tenants, and even his bailiff had the right of administering twenty-five lashes to insubordinate peasants. The *time* of the forced labour was at the option of the lord, who might oblige his tenant to give his term of labour consecutively during seed-sowing or harvest, at the very time that the peasant's own land required his attendance. It may easily be imagined that this was a fruitful cause of dispute between the lord and his serfs.

"But the most glaring act of injustice under the old system was that *all the taxes* were paid by the session-holding peasantry, while the nobles were privileged and tax-free. They absolutely contributed nothing to the revenue of the country in the way of direct taxes!

"This peculiarity of the Constitution made it the interest of the Crown to *preserve* the area of the tax-paying peasant-land against the encroachments of the tax-free landlord. It often happened that on the death or removal of a peasant-holder the lord would choose to absorb the session-land into the *allodium*, which, being tax-free, resulted in a loss to the imperial revenue. To prevent this absorption of session-lands by the landlord, and also to accommodate the burdens of the

peasantry, which had become almost intolerable in the last century, owing to the tyranny of the feudal superiors—to prevent this, I repeat, a general memorial survey with a view to readjustment took place in 1767 by command of Maria Theresa.

"This very important settlement, which came to be known as the 'URBARIAL CONSCRIPTION,' laid down and defined the rights and services of the peasants, and the amount of land to be held by them. The nobles henceforth were obliged to find new tenants of the peasant class in the event of the 'session-lands' becoming vacant. Likewise their unjust impositions on the serfs were restricted, and the *rights* of the latter, in respect to wood-cutting and pasturage on the lord's lands, were established by law.

"This was all very well as far as it went," said my friend; "but the inequality of taxation and the forced labour were crying evils not to be endured in the nineteenth century. Our people who travelled in England and elsewhere came back imbued with new ideas. We in Transylvania assume the credit of taking the lead in liberal politics. Baron Wesselényi was one of the first to advise a radical reform, and others—Count Bethlen, Baron Kemeny, and Count Teleki—were all agreed as to the necessity of bringing about the manumission of the serfs.

It is an old story now. I am speaking of the third and fourth decades of the century, and political excitement was at white-heat. The extreme views of Wesselényi raised a host of opponents among his own class, who regarded the prospect of reform as nothing short of class suicide. Everything else might go to the devil as long as they retained their privileges; the devil, however, is apt to make a clean sweep of the board when he has got the game in his own hands, but these noble wiseacres could not see that. In other parts of the country good men and true were working up the leaven of reform. The great patriot Széchenyi, as long ago as 1830, when he published his work on 'Credit,' had shown his countrymen their shortcomings. He had proved to them that their laws and their institutions were not marching with the spirit of the age; that, in short, the 'rights of humanity' called for justice. What this truly great man did for the material improvement of his country could hardly be told between sunrise and sundown. You practical English were our teachers and our helpers in those days, when bridges had to be built, roads to be made, and steam navigation set up in our rivers. English horses were brought over to improve the breed in Hungary, and English agricultural machinery still turns out treasure-trove from our fields. But

beyond all this, what we saw and admired in England's history was her constitutional struggles for liberty; the efforts made by freedom within the pale of the law; her capacity, in short, for self-reform. You see how it is, my dear sir, that everything English is so popular with us in Hungary."

I bowed my acknowledgments, and begged my friend to proceed with his narrative of events.

"Well, to go back to our own history," he continued, in a tone which had in it a shade of melancholy, "you see from 1823 to the eve of 1848 the Diet had been tinkering at reform in a half-hearted sort of way, but the Paris revolution let loose the whirlwind, and events were precipitated. I need not tell you there was a standing quarrel between us and the reactionary rulers in Vienna. It was the deceitful policy of Austria to bring about a temporary show of agreement between us. The Archduke Stephen was appointed Viceroy, assisted by a council composed entirely of Hungarians. Now mark this turning-point in our history. The first Act of this Diet, presided over by Count Batthyanyi, was to abolish at one sweep the class privileges of the nobility. Roundly speaking, eight millions of serfs received their freedom by that Act! Nor was this all, the important part remains to be told—and I do not

think foreigners always realise it—the Act further enforced that the session-lands held by the peasants became henceforth *their freehold property.* Half, or nearly half, the kingdom thus, by the voluntary concession of the nobles, became converted from a feudal tenure, burdened with duties, into an absolute freehold.

"Like every sudden change, the result was not unmixed good. The Wallacks especially were not prepared for their emancipation; they thought equality before the law meant equality of goods."

I now inquired how the working of the land laws was carried out, and to this my friend replied:—

"As a lawyer I can give you an exact statement in a few words. The disturbed state of the country after the war of independence, which followed immediately upon the emancipation of the serfs, prevented for a while the effective realisation of the great reform of '48. However, in 1853 several imperial decrees were promulgated, by means of which the changed system was worked out in detail. 'Urbarial courts' were instituted to inquire into the amount of compensation due to the lords of the manors who had lost the tithes and the 'forced labour' of the former serfs. To meet this compensation 'State urbarial bonds' were created and apportioned; they bear five per

cent. interest, and are redeemable within eighty years, with two drawings annually. The fund for this compensation is raised by a special tax on every Hungarian subject; not only the freed peasant pays towards the fund, but the lord himself, and those who never had any feudal tenants.

"The peasants had also to receive their compensation for the loss of pasturage and the right of cutting wood on the lord's demesne. In lieu of these privileges they received allotments of forest and pasturage as absolute property. The land thus acquired by the peasants is in fact *parish property*, or in other words, communal property. This is the only instance in which the parish appears as landowner, for all other peasant property, with the exception of the parish buildings, such as the school, is the property of the respective peasants. The parish authorities regulate the usage of the common pasturage and common forest. The sale or cutting down of the latter is subject to the permission of the county authorities."

I now proceeded to question my friend about the laws respecting the transfer of land, and especially about the registration of titles of estate. To these inquiries he replied as follows:—

"Land in Hungary is the absolute property of that person, or corporate body, who appears as

owner in the registry. A limitation of claim to ownership does not exist with us; indeed it is contrary to the law. The *Avitische Patent* of 1854 prescribed further that every one should be regarded as the rightful owner who actually held the property in 1848—*i.e.*, the *status quo* of 1848 to be accepted as the basis. The *Urbarium* of Maria Theresa was, in short, the stand-point in all these arrangements, whether it was the sessional lands of tenants formerly held in hereditary use, now freehold, or the *allodium* of the noble. Immediately succeeding the *Avitische Patent*, the *registration of land* was made law, in conformity with which all estates had been surveyed and entered on the registry as belonging to those owners who possessed the same in consequence of the above-named patent."

"But how about disputed inheritance-lands held by mortgagees, and other contingencies always arising in regard to estates?" I asked.

"I am sorry to say that dreadful cases of injustice were caused by this enactment. Whole families were reduced to beggary, and the greatest rascals obtained possession by this law of enormous estates, simply because they happened to hold the land in 1848, and the rightful owner did not advance his claim within the prescribed time. The

evil could not be redressed, and in 1861, when the Hungarian Constitution was reinstated, the Diet of that year was obliged to accept and confirm the *Avitische Patent*, and the registration of land as directly following it. The grievances are past, but the benefit remains to us and our children. In Hungary at the present time the transfer of land is as simple as buying or selling the registered shares of a railway company. The registry forms the basis of every transaction connected with landed property, and, as we lawyers say, what is not entered there *non est in mundo.* Mortgages must be set down against the registered title. Contracts of leases are also entered, and in the case of farms being taken, caution-money, amounting generally to a quarter's rent, must be deposited with the authorities."

"One more question. Are there no entailed estates amongst your aristocracy?"

"Very few, indeed, even among the richest aristocracy. An Act of entailment can, it is true, be founded, but it is rarely permitted, being looked upon with disfavour for reasons of political economy. Such an Act would require in any case the special permission of the sovereign and of Government; and then the estate is placed under a special court. Without special permission from

this court neither an alteration of the Act can take place, nor is sale or mortgage allowed. Hungarian law also interposes some restrictions in the case of a testator, who must leave by will at least half his property to his children. And with regard to women, the law with us is specially careful to preserve a woman's legal existence after marriage."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Fine scenery in Szeklerland—Csik Szent Marton—Absence of inns—The Szekler's love of lawsuits—Csik Szereda—Hospitality along the road—Wallack atrocities in 1848—The Wallacks not Panslavists.

THE charming scenery of the Szeklerland, and the kindly hospitality of the people, induced me to linger on. I had many a ride through those glorious primeval forests, where the girth of the grand old oak-trees and their widespreading branches are in themselves a sight to see: the beech, too, are very fine. Climbing farther, the deciduous woods give place to sombre pine-trees—the greybeards of the mountain. A great charm in this part of the country, at least from a picturesque point of view, is the affluence of water. Every rocky glen has its gurgling rill, every ravine its stream, which, at an hour's notice almost, may become a mountain torrent, should a storm break over the watershed. A plague of waters is no unfrequent occurrence, as the farmer in the valley knows to his cost. Fields are laid under water, and the turbu-

lent streams often bring down great masses of earth and rock in a way that becomes "monotonous" for the man who has to clear his land or his roads of the *débris*. Mr Judd remarks that the volcanic rocks of Hungary have "suffered enormously from denuding causes." Every fresh storm reminds one that the process is in active operation.

After finally leaving Tusnad, I rode on to Csik Szent Marton, where, as there was no inn, I had to present myself at the best house in the place and crave their hospitality. My request was taken as a matter of course, and they received me with the greatest kindness; in fact it was with great difficulty that I could get away the next day. My host entreated me to remain longer, and when he found that I was really bent on departing, he gave me several letters of introduction to friends of his along the road I was likely to travel. It was a very acceptable act of kindness, for there are hardly any inns in this part of the country. "If Transylvania is an odd corner of Europe," then is the Csik or Szeklerland a still more odd corner; by no possibility can it ever be the highroad to anywhere else. I am not surprised that my lawyer friend said that there were still some lawsuits pending in connection with the allotments of forest and pasturage in this part of Hungary, though everything was defi-

nitely settled elsewhere. The Szekler is as troublesome and turbulent in some respects as his own mountain streams; added to which he dearly loves a lawsuit: it is in the eyes of the peasant a patent of respectability, as keeping a gig formerly was in England.

"Why do you go to law about such a trifle?" observed a friend of mine to his neighbour.

"Well, you see I have never had a lawsuit, as all my neighbours have had about something or another; so, now there is the chance, I had better have one myself!"

It is well for the lawyers that there is "a good deal of human nature" everywhere, especially in Hungary, otherwise they would have a bad time of it, where the legal expenses of "transfer" are a few florins, whether it be for an acre of vineyard or for half a *comitat.* I must observe, however, that in the sale of lands or houses, Government intervenes with a heavy tax on the transaction.

Leaving my hospitable entertainers at Csik Szent Marton, I went on to Csik Szereda, where I was kindly taken in by the postmaster. In this case I was provided with a letter; but a stranger would naturally go to the postmaster or the clergyman to ask for a night's lodging. At first I felt diffident on this score; but I soon got over my shyness,

for in Szeklerland they make a stranger so heartily welcome that he ceases to regard himself as an intruder. In out-of-the-way places one is looked upon as a sort of heaven-sent "special correspondent." There is a story told of Baron ——, one of the nearly extinct old-fashioned people, who regularly, an hour or so before the dinner-hour, rides along the nearest highroad to try and catch a guest. It has even been whispered that on one occasion a couple of intelligent-looking travellers, who declined to be "retained" for dinner, were severely beaten for their recalcitrant behaviour, by order of the hospitable Baron. The story is well founded, and I daresay took place before '48, when anything might have happened.

I can bear witness that I have never myself been ill-treated for declining Hungarian hospitality, but when in Saxonland something very much the reverse occurred to me. I once entered a village at the end of a long day's ride, and stopping at the first house, asked for a night's lodging, whereupon I was told to ask at the next house. They said they could not take me in, excusing themselves on the score of an important domestic event being expected. I went on a little farther, though the "shades of night were falling fast," and repeated my request at the next house. I give you my word, there were *more*

domestic events—always the same excuse. I began to calculate that the population must be rapidly on the increase in that place. It was too much. I entered the last house of that straggling village with a stern resolve that not even new-born twins should bar my claim to hospitality!

I found the postmaster at Csik Szereda a very intelligent man, with a fund of anecdotes and recollections, which generally centred in the troubles of '48. As I mentioned before, the Szeklers rose *en masse* against the Austrians. One of their officers, Colonel Alexander Gál, proved himself a very distinguished leader. Corps after corps were organised and sent to aid General Bem. "It was a terrible time; the men had to fight the enemy in the plain while our old men and women defended their homesteads against the jealous Saxons and the brutal Wallacks."

It was not in one place, or from one person, but from every one with whom I spoke on the subject, that I heard frightful stories of Wallack atrocities. In one instance a noble family—in all, thirteen persons, including a new-born infant—were slaughtered under circumstances of horrible barbarity within the walls of their castle. The name I think was Bardi; it is matter of history.

Amongst other horrors, the Wallacks on several occasions buried their victims alive, except the head,

which they left above ground; they would then hurl stones at the unfortunate creatures, or cut off the heads with a scythe. It was not a war of classes but of race, for the poor peasants amongst the Magyars and Szeklers fared just as badly at the hands of the infuriated Wallacks as the nobles.

The belief is still held that the Vienna Government instigated the outbreak. Certainly arms had been put into the hands of these uncivilised hordes under the pretence of organising a sort of militia. Metternich knew the character of these irregulars, as he had known and proved the character of the Slovacks in Galicia in the terrible rising of the serfs in 1846. His complicity on that occasion has never been disproved.

The winter of 1848-49 must have been a time of unexampled misery to the Magyars of Transylvania. The nobles generally dared not remain in their lonely châteaux; it was not a question of bravery, for how could the feeble members who remained home from the war guard the castle from the torches of a hundred frantic, yelling wretches, who, with arms in their hands, spared neither age nor sex? For the time they were mad—these Eastern people are subject to terrible epidemics of frenzy!

The Szekler town of Maros Vásárhely, which was strong enough to keep the Wallacks at bay, was the

sanctuary of the noble ladies and children of that part of Transylvania. It was so full of fugitives that the overcrowding was most distressing. A lady, the bearer of an historic name, told me herself that she and seven of her family passed the whole winter in one small room in Maros Vásárhely. Added to the discomfort and insalubrity of this crowding, they were almost penniless, having nothing but "Kossuth money." For the time the sources of their income were entirely arrested. In this instance one of the children died—succumbed to bad air and privation. Another patrician dame kept her family through the winter by selling the vegetables from her garden; this together with seventeen florins in silver was all they had to depend upon. Add to this the misery of not hearing for weeks, perhaps even for months, from their husbands or sons, who were with the armies of Görgey or Bem.

The Magyars were not always safe in the towns, for at Nagy Enyed, a rather considerable place, the Wallacks succeeded in setting fire to it, and butchered all the inhabitants who were not fortunate enough to escape their fury. In the neighbourhood of Reps the castles of the nobility suffered very severely. Grim incidents were told me, things that were too horrible not to be true—infants spiked and women tortured. One cannot

dwell upon the details! What struck me as very remarkable was the fact that Magyars and Wallacks are now dwelling together again in peace side by side. It reminds one of the people who plant their vines again on Vesuvius directly an eruption is over. In the last century, in 1784, there was a dreadful outbreak of the Wallacks. Individually they are really not bad fellows—so it seemed to me—and one hears of fewer murders among them than perhaps in Ireland. The danger exists of leaders arising who may stir up the nationality fever—the idea of the great *Roumain* nation that looms big in their imagination!

They love neither Croatians, Slavonians, nor Austrians, and they are no longer a safe card to play off against the Magyars; but indeed I would fain believe that better and wiser counsels now prevail. Austria is not the Austria of '48, any more than the England of to-day is the same as England before the Reform Bill.

The autumn evenings were getting long, and after supper, as I sat smoking my pipe by the stove in the simple but scrupulously neat apartment of my host, he, in his turn, asked me about England. It is very touching the warmth with which these people in the far-off "land beyond the forest" speak of us. "We never can forget how kindly England

received our patriots." This, or words like it, were said to me many times, and always the name of Palmerston came to the fore. "He cordially hated the Austrians." What better ground of sympathy?

CHAPTER XXIV.

Ride to Szent Domokos—Difficulty about quarters—Interesting host—Jewish question in Hungary—Taxation—Financial matters.

FROM Szereda I went to Szent Domokos. It was a long ride, and I was again nearly benighted. However, I reached my destination this time just as the last streak of daylight had departed.

I had some difficulty in making the people I met understand that I wanted the postmaster's house. No one, it appeared, could speak a word of German. At length I found the place; but a new difficulty arose. The postmaster, it seemed, was away, as far as I could make out from his wife. She seemed greatly puzzled, not to say alarmed, at seeing an armed horseman ride up, who demanded hospitality; and I daresay she was the more puzzled at not being able "to place me," as the Yankees say, for she asked me if I was a Saxon, an Austrian, or a Turk? My appearance, I suppose, was rather uncouth and alarming. She was young and very pretty—an Armenian, I learned afterwards. These

women are apt to have Oriental notions about men, and she was evidently afraid to ask me in.

There was I, with my tired horse, completely up a tree. I thought to myself, I cannot stay in the street, so pushing my way through a sort of court-yard, I found out what appeared to be the stable. This I took possession of, all the time making the most polite bows and gestures, for we hardly understood a word of each other's language. There was no help for it, I must make myself at home. I put the horse up, I relieved him of his saddle and saddle-bags, and seeing a bucket and a well not far off, I fetched some water. By this time the young woman had called in some neighbours, and I could see them watching me from behind the half-closed doors and windows. I must observe I had lighted my own lantern that I always carried with me, so that my proceedings were made quite visible to the cautious spectators. They never attempted to interfere with me, and I went on doing my work quietly and unostentatiously. The position was ludicrous in the highest degree!

While I was yet foraging for my horse's supper, by good-luck in came the postmaster. He spoke German, and I was soon able to make all square. He was as civil as possible, offering me at once the hospitality of his roof, which in fact I had already

assumed. I saw he was very anxious to remove the unpleasant impression of his wife's mistake. He bade me welcome many times over, he thanked me for the honour I did him in offering to sleep under his humble roof, and further persisted in calling me "Herr Lord." It was in vain that I corrected him on this point. "I was an Englishman, therefore I must be a 'Herr Lord,' and there was an end of it."

When Mr Boner was travelling in Szeklerland he was also, *nolens volens*, raised to the peerage, so I suppose it is a settled conviction of the people that we are all lords in Great Britain.

We had for supper a capital *filet d'ours* from a bear that had been shot only two days before. I enjoyed my supper immensely; the wine was as good as the food. My pretty hostess laughed a good deal over the false alarm my appearance had created. Her husband interpreted between us, but I promised to learn Hungarian before I paid them another visit. My host proved himself to be a very intelligent man; I had an exceedingly interesting conversation with him after supper. He complained bitterly of the heavy pressure of taxation, saying that Government ought to manage things more economically, for that every year now there was a deficit.

"Yet your country is rich in natural resources, as rich almost as France, barring her advantages of seaboard."

"Yes, we have wealth under the soil," he replied, "and what we want is capital to develop our resources. Herein Austria has stood in our way; you know the old policy of Austria, as far back as Maria Theresa's time, which was to make Hungary Catholic, to make her poor, and to turn her people into Germans. This last they will never do; but they have succeeded in their second project only too well. They have made us poor enough, they have discouraged manufactures and industries of every kind. We wish for free trade, but Austria is opposed to it. The manufactures of Bohemia must be nursed, and accordingly we are made to suffer. We want to be brought into contact with our customers in Western Europe; we want, in fact, to get our trade out of the hands of the Jews."

"I wish to ask you your candid opinion about the Jews. Some people say they are the curse of the country; others again, that Hungarian commerce would be nowhere without them."

"I will tell you what happens," replied my friend, evading a direct answer to my latter observation. "A wretched Jew comes into this village, or some

other place—it does not matter, it is always the same story. He comes probably from Galicia as poor as a rat, he settles himself in the village, and sells *slivovitz* on credit to the foolish peasant, who, besotted with drink and debt, gets into his meshes; in the end, the Jew having sucked the blood of his victims, possesses himself of their little property, finds himself the object of universal hatred, and then he moves on. He makes a fresh start in some other place, beginning on a higher rung of the ladder; and you will find him sitting in the highest seats before he has done."

"If your people were less of spendthrifts and managed their affairs themselves, then the Jews would cease to find a harvest amongst you."

"Yes, that is true," he answered; "but we are not practical; we do not organise well. The Jew always manages to be the middle-man between ourselves and the consumers."

"But without the Jew you would perhaps not even get so near to the consumer," I observed quietly.

My host puffed out a volume of smoke, and after a pause observed, before he placed his pipe again between his lips, "In this part of the country, in the Szeklerland, the better class of merchants are nearly all Armenians."

Apropos of the tax question, I have looked into the matter since, and I am rather surprised to find the proportion not so heavy as I thought; on the whole population it is about £1 a-head—certainly less than is borne by many other states. In England, I believe, we are taxed at over £2 a-head. Then, again, it is true that since 1870 there has been an annual deficit, and the equilibrium of income and expenditure can hardly be counted upon just yet; still things are moving in the right direction. The Hungarians have been reproached for managing their finances badly since the compromise with Austria in 1867, when the revenue came exclusively under their own control. But in answer they say, that having so lately entered the community of states, they found themselves in the position of a minor who comes into house and lands that have need of every sort of radical repair and improvement. Hungary has had to spend heavily upon road-making, bridges, railroads, sanatory and other economic improvements, and very heavily for rectification of the course of the Danube; in fact they have ambitiously set themselves too much to do in the time. They have rendered Buda-Pest, with its magnificent river embankments, one of the finest capitals in Europe. The Magyar does everything with a degree of splendour that savours of the

Oriental. They know not the meaning of the homely adage which tells a man to "cut his coat according to his cloth."

Added to the pressure of accumulated expenses, Hungary has had a succession of bad harvests—she has been passing through the seven lean years. The last season has shown, however, a decided improvement, so we may hope the bad corner is turned. I am informed that this year the schedule for unpaid—viz., arrears of—taxes is completely wiped off. Then, again, the income-tax in the space of five years ending 1874 increased from 5,684,000 florins to 27,650,000 florins!

The financial account of the current year is reassuring. At the sitting of the Hungarian Diet on the 30th October,[1] the minister, in presenting the estimates for 1878, said that in 1876 and 1877 the expenditure had been reduced by £1,250,000. It was not possible to continue at the same rate, and the net reduction next year would be £360,000. It is true the deficit of 1877 is £1,600,000, a sufficiently grave sum; but to judge the position fairly it is necessary to look at the budgets of former years. In 1874, "in consequence of rather too hasty investment of money in railways and other

[1] 'Hungarian Finances,' the Times, October 31, 1877.

public works," the deficit was £6,000,700 ; in 1876 it had fallen to £3,100,000. The present year, therefore, shows a steady reduction of those ugly figures at the wrong side of the national account.

CHAPTER XXV.

Copper mine of Balanbanya—Miners in the wine-shop—Ride to St Miklos—Visit to an Armenian family—Capture of a robber —Cold ride to the baths of Borsék.

HAVING expressed a wish to see the copper mine at Balanbanya, which is some five miles from Szent Domokos, my host proposed to drive me over the next morning. When the morning came the weather looked most unpromising; there was a steady downpour, without any perceptible break in the clouds in any quarter. I had made up my mind to go, and as after the noonday meal it cleared slightly, we started. The mud was nearly up to the axletree of our cart. After driving some time we reached a wild and rather picturesque valley, in which rises the Alt, or, as it is called when it reaches Roumania, the Aluta. The course of this stream is singularly tortuous, winding about through rocks and defiles, often changing its direction, and finally making a way for itself through the Carpathian range.

As we approached the copper mine it had all the appearance of a volcano, for a heavy cloud of

smoke hung over the spot like a canopy. This mine has been worked for many years; formerly it paid well, but now it is in the hands of a company, who are working at a loss, if I could believe what I was told.

I have repeatedly noticed in Hungary that people commit themselves to works of this kind without the technical knowledge necessary to carry them on successfully. The necessary capital, too, is generally wanting to bring these mining operations to a successful issue; added to this the managers are often not conspicuous for their honesty.

I went over these works, and gave particular attention to the refinery. Some of the processes for collecting the metal are ingeniously simple and effective. The copper-ore is remarkably pure, being, it is said, free from arsenic and antimony. The concern ought to pay, for the copper is so well esteemed that it obtains the best price in the market.

After inspecting the place, we went into the inn to have some supper, and while there, several miners came in. I had heard that they were renowned for their mining songs down in these parts, so I made friends with the men and begged them to sing. After a little persuasion and a refilling of glasses they began.

The music of their songs was very mournful, and the words equally so, descriptive of the dangers the poor miner had to encounter in searching for ore in the gloomy depths of the earth. I believe my companion, the postmaster, was very puzzled to understand what could interest me in these rough miners. The scene was exceedingly picturesque; for some six or eight of these stalwart fellows, with skin and clothes reddened by the earth, sat by a long table, each with his flask of wine before him, while the flicker of an oil-lamp threw its yellow light over the group. One of the men spoke German, and with him I talked. He had elicited from me the fact of my being an Englishman, whereupon he asked me a variety of questions about our mines and our forests. Finally he inquired whether our bears were as large as theirs. When I told him we had none he could not credit it, saying, "But you must have bears on the frontier?" When I explained that we lived upon an island he seemed much surprised. I saw that his natural politeness prevented his saying what was in his mind, but it was evident he thought that if the English lived in an island they could not be such a great people after all.

Not wishing to put my host to expense, more especially as the expedition was undertaken solely

for my benefit and at my suggestion, I paid the score at the Balanbanya Inn without saying anything. I was very vexed to find, however, that by doing so I had offended my companion very much. He reminded me that I was a stranger in Szeklerland and his guest, and it was contrary to all his ideas of hospitality that I should be the paymaster. Instead of starting homewards, as we were ready to do, he ordered more wine and some sardines, being the greatest delicacy the house afforded. I was obliged to make a show of partaking of something more, though I had amply supped. For these extras of course my friend paid, but he was only half appeased, and was never quite the same again.

The following morning I left the house of my too-hospitable entertainers. My destination now was St Miklos. My road thither lay through a pine-forest, as lonely a tract as could well be imagined, for there were no signs whatever of human habitations. Certainly the weird solitude of a pine-wood is more impressive than any other kind of forest scenery. Under the impervious shade and the long grey vistas, one moves forward with something of a superstitious feeling, as though one were intruding into the sanctuary of unseen spirits. I cannot say that I was a prey to such

idle fancies, for the spirits I was likely to meet would be very tangible enemies. This district had a bad reputation, owing to several robberies having been committed in the neighbourhood; in fact the whole country was just then under martial law. I was well armed, and being alone I kept my weather-eye open; but I saw not even the ghost of a brigand, and reached St Miklos in safety.

It is usual when incendiary fires or robberies have been rife in any district to place that part of the country under the *Statorium*, so that if any person or persons are caught in *flagrante delicto*, they are summarily tried and hung before a week is over. When I was in Transylvania in the autumn of '75, the whole of the north-eastern corner was under the *Statorium*.

At St Miklos I put up at the house of an Armenian, who received me with a most frank and kindly welcome, conducting me to the guest-chamber himself after giving orders to the servants to attend to my horse. St Miklos is charmingly situated in the valley of Gyergyó, at an elevation of nearly 3000 feet above the sea-level. Here one is right in amongst the mountains, the higher summits rising grandly around. The scenery is very fine. There are interminable forests on every side, broken by ravines and valleys, with strips of green

pasture-land. In former times these primeval woods were tenanted by the wild aurochs, but now one sees only the long-horned white cattle and the wiry little horses belonging to the villages that nestle about in unexpected places. St Miklos is almost entirely inhabited by Armenians. There is a market here, and it is considered the central place of the district. The year before my visit the town was nearly destroyed by fire. Upwards of three hundred houses were burned down in less than three hours. The loss of property was considerable, including stores of hay and *kukoricz* (Indian corn). Since this conflagration, which caused such widespread distress in the place, they have established a volunteer fire brigade. This ought to exist in every village. Prompt action would often arrest the serious proportions of a fire. It would be a good thing if some substitute could be found for the wooden tiles used for roofing; in course of time they become like tinder, and a spark will fire the roof. The houses in Hungary are not, as a rule, constructed of wood, as in Upper Austria and Styria, nor are they nearly so picturesque as in that part of the world. In some Hungarian villages the cottages are painted partly blue and partly yellow, which has a very odd effect; and throughout the country they are built with the gable-end to the road.

When I was at St Miklos there was great excitement over the recent capture of a famous robber chief, whose band had kept the country-side in a state of alarm for some months past. I was asked if I would like to go and see him, and of course I was glad to get a sight at last of one of the robbers of whom I had heard so much in my travels. I was never more surprised than, on arriving in front of a very shaky wooden building, to be told that this was the prison. A few resolute fellows might have easily broken in and effected the rescue of their chief.

There was no romance about the appearance of the miserable wretch that we found within, stretched on a rough bed with wrists and feet heavily ironed. These manacles were hardly needed, for he was severely wounded, and seemed incapable of rising from his pallet. I never saw so repulsive a countenance; and the flatness of the head was quite remarkable. His eyes were very prominent, and had the restless look of a hunted animal, which was painful in the extreme; but there was absolutely no redeeming expression of human feeling in the dark coarse face. Well, there was something human about him though. I was told he had been photographed that morning, and that he had expressed considerable satisfaction at the idea of his portrait

being preserved. He was under sentence of death! There were various stories told of his capture, but I think the following is the true account. It appears that he and his gang made their appearance from time to time in the forest round the well-known watering-place of Borsék. When visitors were on their way to the baths, they were frequently stopped by the robbers in a mountain pass, in the immediate neighbourhood of a dense forest that stretches far away for miles and miles over the frontier. It was the custom of the robbers to demand all the money, and they would relieve the travellers of their fur cloaks and overcoats, and other useful articles; but if they did not offer any resistance, they were permitted to go on uninjured, to take their cure at the baths. I should doubt, however, that anybody would be welcome there without a well-filled purse; at least I judge so from what I heard of the eminently commercial character of the place.

The robbers had the game in their own hands for a long while, but they made a mistake one fine day. They stopped a handsome equipage, which seemed to promise a good haul; but lo, behold, it was the *Obergespannirz*, the lord-lieutenant of the county! He had four good horses, and so saved himself by flight. But the authorities now really bestirred themselves, and the soldiers were called

out to exterminate this troublesome brood. They were accompanied by a renowned bear-slayer who knew the forest well. It was with great difficulty that they succeeded at last in tracking the robbers, or rather robber, for it was only the chief who was trapped after all. It appears that the soldiers and their guide came upon a small hut surrounded by almost impenetrable thickets. The hunter crept on in advance of the rest, and looking into the interior through the chinks of timbers, he saw a man drying his clothes by a small fire. He quietly said, "Good-day." The robber started up, and seizing his gun, flung open the door and fired his fowling-piece at once at his visitor. Fortunately the powder proved to be damp, or he must have received the full charge. The bear-slayer was now in close quarters, and fired off his revolver within a short distance of the other's head. The shot took effect, and he fell in a heap stunned and senseless. At first they thought he was dead, and it is marvellous that the well-aimed discharge did not kill him. His skull must have been uncommonly thick. This fellow was known to be the leader. The rest of the gang had probably escaped into Moldavia, from whence they came.

My friends at St Miklos were kind enough to promise to get up a bear-hunt for me, and it was

arranged that I should go and see the baths of Borsék, and return on Saturday night, so as to be ready for the bear-hunt on Sunday. The "better observance of the Sabbath" is always associated with bear-hunting in these parts.

I left St Miklos in a snowstorm, though it was only the 16th of September—very early for such signs of winter. I was not prepared for wintry weather. It frustrated my plans and expectations a good deal. I was disappointed, too, in the climate, for I had always heard that the late autumn is about the finest time for Transylvania.

I have invariably remarked that whenever I go to a new country it is the signal for "abnormal meteorological disturbances," as they call bad weather in the newspapers. My own notion is that weather is a very mixed affair everywhere.

For three mortal hours I rode on through a blinding snowstorm. At length I espied the ruin of an unfinished cottage by the wayside, and here I bethought me I would take shelter and see after my dinner; for whatever happens, I can be hungry directly afterwards—I think an earthquake would give me an appetite.

My unfurnished lodgings were in as wild a spot as imagination could picture. No wonder that the builder had abandoned the construction of this

solitary dwelling; why it had ever been commenced passes my comprehension. It was just at the entrance of a mountain valley, treeless, stony, and rugged, through which there were at intervals the semblance of a track—a desolate, God-forgotten-looking place. On consulting the map I found that the "road" led to Moldavia. I resolved it should not lead me there. Here then, in this dreary spot, with its gable-end to the road, and turning away from the prospect—and no wonder—stood the carcass of a cottage. My horse and I scrambled over the breach in the wall, where a garden never had smiled, and got into the roofless house. It was with considerable difficulty that I found sticks enough for my kitchen fire. I had to try back on the route I had passed, for I remembered not far in the rear a group of firs standing sentinels in the pass. I always took care to have an end of rope in my pocket; with this I tied up my fagot, shouldered it, and returned to the house of entertainment. The result of my trouble was a blazing fire, whereat I cooked an excellent robber-steak. I made myself some tea, and afterwards enjoyed—yes, actually enjoyed—my pipe. There is a pleasure in battling with circumstances, even in such a small affair as getting one's dinner under difficulties.

After washing-up (by good-luck there was a

stream near by), I packed up my belongings, and giving a last look around to see that I had left nothing, I departed without as much as a *pour-boire* for "service," one of the advantages of self-help.

The prospect for the rest of my ride was not lively, a good ten miles yet to be done on a bad road. It had ceased to snow, but the clouds kept driving down into the valley as if the very heavens themselves were in a state of mobilisation. It is curious to notice sometimes in the higher Carpathians how the clouds march continuously through the winding valleys; always moving and driving on, these compact masses of vapour are impelled by the currents of air in the defiles which seam the mountains.

My way was now through an interminable pine-forest, the road stretching in a perfectly straight line and at a perceptible rise. Indeed it was uphill work altogether. The ceaseless dripping of the rain made the whole scene as cheerless as it well could be. The snow had turned to cold dull rain, which was far more depressing. I wished the mineral springs at Borsék had never been discovered. It was too late to turn back to St Miklos, where I devoutly wished myself, so I had nothing to do but plod on with my waterproof tight round me. It was impossible to go

fast, for in places the mud was very deep and the road was beset with big stones.

It was dark when I reached Borsék, and again I wished I had never come. The inn was very uncomfortable; there was no fireplace in any of the rooms. The baths are only used in the height of summer, and if it turns cold, as it does sometimes at this elevation, people I suppose must freeze till it gets warm again. I had come a fortnight too late; the world of fashion departs from Borsék at the end of August. Ten or twelve springs rise within a short area, and vary curiously in quality and temperature. The source which is principally used for exportation is remarkable for the quantity of carbonic acid it contains. About 12,000 bottles are filled every day; some 1500 on an average break soon after corking, owing partly to the bad quality of the bottles. There is a glass manufactory in the place, and though they have good material they turn out the work badly.

The export trade in the mineral waters is very large. They are much valued for long sea voyages, as the water keeps for years without losing its gaseous qualities.[1]

The baths of Borsék belong to two different parishes, and they are by no means agreed as to

[1] The waters of Borsék are much taken as an "after-cure."

the management. Some years ago the principal spring was struck by lightning and entirely lost for a time, but after much digging it was found again. The situation of Borsék is extremely romantic, and in the height of summer it must be very delightful; but in summer only—let no one follow my example and go there out of season. Of course the place is surrounded by magnificent forests, but it is a crying shame to see how they have been treated. In every direction there is evidence of the ravages of fire. You may see in a morning's walk the blackened stems of thousands of trees, the results of Wallack incendiarism. If the Wallacks go on destroying the forests in this way, they will end in injuring the value of the place as a health resort; for the efficacy of the perfumed air of the pine-woods is well known, especially for all nervous diseases.

The houses are badly built at Borsék, and the arrangements for comfort are very incomplete. Most of the habitations appear to have been run up with green wood; the result may be pleasant and airy in summer, when the balmy breeze comes in from cracks in the doors and window-frames, but except in great heat, a perforated house is a mistake. People have to bring their own servants and other effects. I should say a portable stove would not be a bad item amongst the luggage.

The Borsék waters are very much drunk throughout Hungary, especially mixed with wine. Everywhere I noticed that eight people out of ten would take water with their wine at meals. In the district round there is splendid pasturage for cattle. Large numbers of cattle fed in these parts are now sent to Buda-Pest and Vienna. The serious drawback to Borsék is its great distance from a railway. The nearest station is Maros Vásárhely, which is nearly ninety miles away. The drive between the two places is very fine—that is, the scenery is fine, but the road itself is execrable. A telegraph wire connects Borsék with the outside world, but the post only comes twice a-week.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Moldavian frontier—Tölgyes—Excitement about robbers—Attempt at extortion — A ride over the mountains — Return to St Miklos.

INSTEAD of going back to St Miklos by the same route, I resolved to diverge a little if the weather permitted. I wanted to visit Tölgyes, a village on the frontier of Moldavia, which is said to be very pretty. The weather decidedly improved, so I rode off in that direction. The road, owing to the late rains, was in a dreadful state. All the mountain summits were covered with fresh snow; it was a lovely sight. The dazzling whiteness of these peaks rising above the zone of dark fir-trees was singularly striking and beautiful. The effect of sunshine was exhilarating in the highest degree, and the contrast with my recent experience gave it a keener relish.

At Tölgyes there is a considerable trade with Moldavia in wood. Quite a fresh human interest was imparted to the scene by this industry. By the side of the stream small rafts were in course

of construction, and the trunks of the trees were being placed in position to make the descent of the stream. The woodman's axe was heard in the forest, and many a picturesque hut or group of huts were to be seen by the roadside, where the woodmen and their families live, to be near their work. The labour of getting the timber along these tortuous mountain streams is very great. A ready market is found at Galatz, where a great deal of this wood is sent.

I remained the night at Tölgyes. The whole place was in a state of excitement about brigands; every one had some fresh rumour to help swell the general panic. A company of soldiers were kept constantly patrolling the roads in the neighbourhood. I should say they were pretty safe not to encounter the robbers, who are always well informed under these circumstances.

In studying my pocket-map, I found that there was clearly a short cut over the mountains to St Miklos. On inquiry I extracted the confirmation of the fact with difficulty, and I had still more difficulty in inducing anybody to go with me as a guide. At length I secured the services of a fellow who was willing to go for a tolerably substantial "consideration." I was afraid to work my way entirely by the map, for roads are apt to be vague

in these parts. Ten chances to one whether you know a road when you see it; it might be a green sward, or the rubbly dry bed of a mountain torrent, or a cattle-track; it may lead somewhere or nowhere. Unassisted you may wander all manner of ways.

I made my start very early in the morning, for I had a long way to go, and my guide was on foot; there was not much use in being mounted, considering the pace that the roughness of the road forced us to take. Before leaving Tölgyes I had a row with the innkeeper. He made a most exorbitant demand upon me, at least three times over what was properly due. I told him at once that I declined to pay the full amount he asked. I knew perfectly well what the charge ought to be, and I said I should pay that and no more. Hereupon he got very angry, and informed me that he should not saddle my horse or let me go till I had paid him in full. I immediately went into the stable and saddled the horse myself; I then put down on the window-seat the money which I considered was due to him, giving a fair and liberal margin, but I was not going to be "done" because I was a foreigner. I ordered my guide to proceed, and I myself quickly rode out of the place. The innkeeper worked himself up into a

tremendous rage, and declared he would have me back, or at least he would have his cold meat and bread back that I had ordered for the journey. I gave my horse the rein, and left the fellow uttering his blessings both loud and deep.

We had ten miles of as bad a road as any I had yet seen in my travels. The mud in some places was two feet deep. We followed the windings of a stream called the Putna Patak, and came presently to a wayside inn frequented by foresters. Here we made a short halt, got a bottle of decent wine and a crust of bread. Immediately on quitting this place we turned into a less frequented path, and began a stiffish ascent. It was a superb day, and I enjoyed it immensely, not having been much favoured by weather lately. Our route was through a thick forest, the trees, as usual in these, magnificent, with their gigantic girth, and widespreading branches. At times I got a glimpse of the snowy mountain summits standing out against the intensely blue sky.

At mid-day I told the guide to look out for the next spring, for there we would dine. We did not find a spring for some time, at least not by the wayside, and I was reluctant to lose time by wandering about. At length when we had secured a water-tap—viz., a little trickling rill flowing between some

stones and spongy moss—we found ourselves in a difficulty about the fire. There was plenty of wood, but it was all soaking wet and would not burn. Luckily a fir-tree was spied out, which provided us with a good quantity of turpentine, and with this we persuaded the fire to blaze up a bit. We cooked the dinner, had a smoke, a short rest, and then *en avant*—always through the forest.

Later in the afternoon, emerging from the wood, we came upon a grassy plateau which commanded a glorious view of the Transylvanian side of the Carpathians. I was glad to see the familiar valley of Gyergyó away westward, with its numerous villages and green pasturage. The same physical peculiarity pervades the whole of Hungary. Whenever you get a vale of any extent, it is as flat as if it were a bit of the great plain. Everywhere you have the impression that formerly the waters of a lake must have covered the level verdure of the valley. As soon as I caught sight of St Miklos I dismissed my guide, for his services were no longer required, and I could get on quicker without him. I had still a long distance to go, for I was not far below the summit. I was extremely anxious to get into safe quarters before dark, so I made the best of the way, leading my horse down the steep bits,

and mounting again for a short trot where it was possible.

On arriving at the house of my Armenian friends at St Miklos, happily before sundown, I was greatly disappointed to find that there would be no bear-hunt the next day. Those detestable robbers had turned up again, and the people who were to have formed part of the sporting expedition were obliged to go robber-hunting, a sport not much to their taste I fancy.

It appeared that the fellows had entered an out-of-the-way inn, or rather wine-shop, and boldly ordered the owner to procure for them a certain amount of gunpowder, which they required should be ready for them the next day, and failing to carry out their orders, they threatened to shoot him. He was obliged to promise, for there were five of them, and except women he was alone in the house. They drank a quantity of his wine, and asked for no reckoning, saying they would pay for it the next day along with the gunpowder.

Directly they had left the premises, the innkeeper set off as fast as his legs could carry him to St Miklos to ask for help. The robbers seemed to be such bunglers that one would judge them to be new to the business; but the innkeeper's terror knew no bounds, and he declared they were awful-looking

cut-throats. Two of the men were caught the next day. I saw them brought into the village heavily manacled; they were harmless-looking Wallacks, not very different in appearance from my guide over the mountain. Though armed with guns, they made no resistance; and when they were discovered they had called out lustily to the soldiers not to fire, for they would give themselves up. I expect they were let off with imprisonment, but I never heard the end of the story. I owed them a grudge for spoiling my bear-hunt, which I missed altogether, for I could not wait until the following Sunday.

I left St Miklos with an introduction to some rich Armenians at Toplicza, where I intended making my next halt.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Toplicza—Armenian hospitality—A bear-hunt—A ride over to the frontier of Bukovina—Destruction of timber—Maladministration of State property—An unpleasant night on the mountain—Snowstorm.

At Toplicza I was very hospitably received by the family to whom I took the letter of introduction from my friends at the last place. Unfortunately I could not converse with the elders of the family, for they spoke no German, and my Hungarian was limited. However, there was a charming young lady with whom I found no difficulty in getting on; she understood not only the language but the literature of Germany.

A bear-hunt was soon proposed in my honour. The headman of the village was brought into our council, and he quickly sent round orders that everybody was to appear the following day—which conveniently happened to be a *fête* day—for a hunt. Those who had guns would be placed at different "stands," and those who had no guns were expected to act as beaters.

The *Richter*, or headman, was a fine specimen of a Wallack; he was six feet three, broad chested, with flowing black hair—a handsome fellow of that type. I told him I should not like to fight him if he knew how to use his fists. He was pleased at the little compliment. The next day the Wallacks came pouring in from all the outlying parts of the village. It was really a very picturesque sight. The men wore thongs of leather round their feet in place of boots; and those who had no guns were armed with the usual long staff surmounted by the formidable axe-head.

A great deal of time was wasted in preparations. The Wallacks are the most dilatory people in the whole world. It was nearly three o'clock before we got to the forests where we hoped to give Bruin a rendezvous. The guns that some of the party carried were "a caution"—more fit for a museum of armoury than for anything else. The Wallacks try to remedy the inefficiency of their guns by cramming in very large charges of powder, at least two bullets, and some buckshot besides. I often thought the danger was greater to themselves than to the bear. They never fire over twenty-five yards, and in fact generally allow the bear to come within twelve yards, when they pepper away at him.

At last we were in position. It is usual to have

a second gun, but I had only my rifle and revolver; unfortunately my gun was with my baggage at Maros Vásárhely. After waiting for some time without hearing anything but the creaking of the pine-trees in the wind, the advance of the beaters was at length audible. You hear repeated thuds with their axes on the trees, and you know that they are beating up your way. All at once I heard the unmistakable tread of some heavy four-footed beast. I held my breath, fearing to betray my presence. Nearer and nearer came the heavy tread, the branches cracking as the animal broke its way through the thicket. It must be a bear of the largest size, thought I, with a glow of delight warming up my whole frame at this supreme moment. I had just raised the rifle to my shoulder, when—judge my disgust—when emerging from the thicket I saw a stray ox make his appearance! I could hardly resist putting a bullet into the stupid brute's carcass, but I remembered that I should have to pay for that little game.

We moved on to another part of the forest, and the same programme of taking our positions and arranging the course of the beaters was gone through; but we met with no success. This was the more provoking, because on our return we found the fresh slot of a bear. He had evidently just

saved himself in time; the marks of his claws were quite visible in the soft mud.

These footprints were all we were destined to see, for evening was drawing on, and it was impossible to pursue the sport any farther. Of course we commenced operations far too late in the day; it was simply ridiculous to begin at such a late hour in the autumn afternoon. It was very disappointing; but there is so much of mere chance in bear-hunting, that where one man has the luck to kill four or five in a season, another may go on for two years following without getting as much as a shot.

The sportsman will be glad to hear, though the farmer is of quite another mind, that bears, wolves, and wild-boar are increasing very much in the Carpathians generally. I have mentioned this fact before, but I allude to it again because it was everywhere corroborated. On all sides this increase is attributed to the tax on firearms, which deters the peasants from keeping them down. They are often too poor to pay for a shooting licence and the gun-tax.

Toplicza has some warm mineral springs. Warm water seems to be turned on everywhere in Hungary. One of these springs is situated close to the river, where a simple kind of bath-house has been constructed. The water contains iodine. While at

Toplicza I heard that somewhere up in the mountains on the Bukovina side there is a large deposit of sulphur. The accounts were very vague, but I thought I should like to have a look at the place. The district was pronounced to be so unsafe, and so many robbers had appeared on the scene lately, that I thought proper to take two men with me; one as a guide, for he had been there before, and a forester armed with a gun.

My friends the Armenians kindly insisted on providing me with everything necessary in the shape of food; and one day, the weather being fine, I started at noon on this expedition along with my attendants. We soon got into the forest again. The size of the trees was almost beyond belief; but, alas! many of them had been destroyed in the same ruthless manner that I have so often alluded to in my travels. Here were half-burned trunks of splendid oak-trees lying rotting on the ground in every direction, showing clearly that the forest had been fired. The attempt at a clearing, if that was the object, was utterly abortive; for when the trees are down a thick undercover grows up, more impervious by far, and there is less chance of obtaining pasturage than ever, but the Wallack never reasons upon this. The State reckons the value of its "forests" at something like

27,000,000 florins, and yet there is no efficient supervision of this property, which, from the increasing scarcity of wood in Europe, must become in time more and more valuable. The mines of Hungary are estimated in round numbers at 210,000,000 florins, and here again there is a lamentable absence of wise administration. The mining laws, I understand, are at present under revision. Foreign enterprise is not discouraged, but I cannot go so far as to say that the adventure would not meet with difficulties from local obstructions of an official or semi-official nature.

We had started from Toplicza in beautiful weather, but before sunset a complete change came on, and heavy rain set in. This was a very uncomfortable look-out, for we could see nothing that offered us anything like a decent shelter for the night. The guide urged us to go on, for he said there was a hut at the top of the mountain; so we beat our way along through the driving rain, and eventually came to the top. We soon found the hut, but it was a mere ruin; it might have been in Chancery for any number of years, indeed one end had tumbled in. It was as uninviting a place to spend a night in as could well be imagined. Fortunately one corner was still weather-proof, the fir bark of the roof yet remaining intact. We had to be careful, however,

about the roof, which consisted of stems of trees supported longitudinally. It was easy to see that a very little incautious vivacity on our part would bring the whole structure down on our heads. Water was found not far off, and we soon had a fire, which blazed up cheerfully. Its warmth was very necessary, for it was bitterly cold and damp. I had brought with me a hammock made of twine; this I slung in the driest corner, and after supper I turned in and was soon asleep. The faculty of sleep is an immense comfort. A man may put it high up on the credit side in striking the balance of good and evil in his lot.

When I awoke the next morning, I found that the weather was worse than ever. The mist was so dense that the Wallack guide said it was perfectly impossible to go on, in fact we might consider ourselves lucky if we were able to get back without mischance. Not to be daunted, I waited till nearly noon, thinking it was possible that the mist might rise, and restore to us the bright skies of yesterday. A change came, but not the one we hoped for. The cold rain turned into snow, so it would have been sheer madness to think of going on.

We were in a wretched plight, crowded together in the corner of the ruined hut, and snow as well as "light" came in "through the chinks that time had

made." Owing to a change in the wind, the smoke of the fire outside drifted in; and there was evidence of a worse drift—that of the snow, which before nightfall I daresay may have buried the cottage out of sight.

I now gave orders for returning, and just as I stepped out of the hut, or was in the act of leaving, one of the heavy beams from the roof fell upon me; it caught me on the back of my head—a pretty close shave! The ride back, with the consciousness of having failed to attain the object I had in view, was depressing. Nothing could be more unlovely than these once glorious forests. In parts we had to pass through a mere morass, into which my horse kept sinking.

At last we got back to Toplicza. The forester and the Wallack thought themselves amply compensated by a few paper florins. I daresay they kept off the rheumatism by extra potations of *slivovitz*. As for myself, having been dipped, yea, having even undergone total immersion in the morass, I felt like those extinct animals who have left their interesting bones nice and dry in the blue lias, but who in daily life must have been "mud all over." I presented such a spectacle on my return, that I consider it was an instance of the greatest kindness—indeed it must

have been a severe strain on the hospitality of r
friends to give me house-room.

As my garments had not the durability of th
of the Israelites in the wilderness, it became a ve
desirable object to effect a junction with my po
manteau, which was sitting all this time at Ma
Vásárhely. The weather, too, had calmed
ardour for the mountains, and I resolved to str
into the interior of Transylvania, and see someth
of the towns.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Visits at Transylvanian châteaux — Society — Dogs — Amusements at Klausenburg — Magyar poets—Count Istvan Széchenyi—Baron Eötvos—'The Village Notary'—Hungarian self-criticism —Literary taste.

I MUST now drop the itinerary of my journey and speak more in generalities; for after leaving the wilder districts of the Szeklerland, I took the opportunity of presenting some of the letters of introduction that I brought with me from England.

For the succeeding six weeks or more I spent my time most agreeably in the châteaux of some of the well-known Transylvanian nobles. For the time my wild rovings were over. The bivouac in the glorious forest and robber-steak cooked by the camp fire—the pleasures of "roughing it"—were exchanged for the charms of society.

And society is *very* charming in Transylvania. Nearly all the ladies speak English well, and are extremely well read in our literature. To speak French is a matter of course everywhere; but

they infinitely prefer our literature, and speak our language always in preference when they can.

The works of such men as Darwin, Lyell, and Tyndall are read. I remember seeing these, and many other leading authors, in a bookseller's shop in Klausenburg. It is true this last-named place is the capital—viz., the Magyar capital—of Transylvania, but in most respects it is a mere provincial town.

A friend and myself happened to be lunching one day in the principal inn—it was in the *salle à manger*—and we were talking together in English. Presently I noticed a remarkably little man at the next table, who looked towards us several times; finally he got up from his chair, or rather I should say got down, and making a sign to us equivalent to touching his hat, he said, "Gentlemen, I am an Englishman; I thought it right to tell you in case you should think there was no one present who understood what you were talking!" It was very civil of the little fellow, for we were talking rather unguardedly about some well-known personages. I then asked him how he came to be in this part of the world, and he told me he was a jockey, and had been over several times to ride at the Klausenburg races; but he added he was very sorry that they always took place on a Sunday! There is certainly no "*bitter* observance of the Sabbath" in Hungary

generally. Offices are open, and business is conducted as usual—certainly in the morning.

There is some good coursing in the neighbourhood of Klausenburg, which is kept up closely on the pattern of English sport. I had two or three good runs with the harriers, and on one occasion got a spill that was a close shave of breaking my neck. Count T—— had given me a mount. The horse was all right, but not knowing the nature of the country, I was not aware that the ground drops suddenly in many places. Coming to something of this kind without preparation, the horse threw me, and I was pitched down an embankment upwards of twelve feet in depth. Several people who saw the mishap thought it was all up with me, but, curiously enough, I was absolutely unhurt. A pull at my flask set me all right, and I walked back the five miles to Klausenburg. The horse unfortunately galloped away, and was not brought back till the next day, and then minus his saddle; however, it was recovered subsequently.

In the present scare about hydrophobia the following is worth notice. One day when walking in the principal street of Klausenburg I heard a great barking amongst the dogs, of which there were some dozen following a closed van. On inquiry I found that once a-week the authorities send round to see

if there are any dogs at large without the regulation tax-collar. If any such vagabonds are found they are consigned to the covered cart, and are forthwith shot. This excellent arrangement has the effect of keeping down the number of dogs; besides, there is the safeguard attendant upon the responsibility of ownership. The funny part of the matter is that the tax-paying dogs are not the least alarmed at the appearance of the whipper-in, but join with great show of public spirit in denouncing the collarless vagrants.

Klausenburg has not the picturesque situation of Kronstadt, but it is a pleasant clean-looking town, with wide streets diverging from the Platz, where stands the Cathedral, completed by Matthias Corvinus, son of Hunyadi. This famous king, always called "the Just," was born at Klausenburg in 1443.

As Herrmannstadt and Kronstadt are chiefly inhabited by Saxon immigrants, and Maros Vásárhely is the central place of the Szeklers, so may Klausenburg, or rather Kolozsvár, as it is rightly named, be considered the Magyar capital of Transylvania.

The gaieties of the winter season had not commenced when I was there, but I understand the world amuses itself immensely. The nobles come

in from their remote châteaux to their houses, or apartments, as it may be, in town, and then the ball is set going.

There is a good theatre in Klausenburg. I found the acting decidedly above the average of the provincial stage generally. I saw a piece of Molière's given, and though I could only understand the Hungarian very imperfectly, I was enabled to follow it well enough to judge of the acting.

Shakespeare is so great a favourite with the Hungarians that his plays are certainly more often represented on the stage at Buda-Pest than in London. The Hungarian translation of our great poet, as I observed before, is most excellent.

It was a band of patriotic poets who first employed the language of the Magyars in their compositions. Hitherto all literary utterance had been confined to Latin, or to the foreign tongues spoken at courts. The rash attempt of Joseph II. to denationalise the Magyar and to Germanise Hungary by imperial edicts had a violent reactionary result. The strongest and the most enduring expression is to be found in the popular literature which was inaugurated by such men as Csokonai and the two brothers Kisfaludy, who were all three born in the last century. The songs of Csokonai have

retained their hold on the people's hearts because, and here is the keynote—"because they breathe the true Hungarian feeling." The insistent themes of the Magyar poets were the love of country, the joys of home, the duty of patriotism. Such was the soul-stirring 'Appeal' ('Szózat') of Varósmazty, the chief of all the tuneful brethren, the Schiller of Hungary. Born with the nineteenth century, and at once its child and its teacher, he died in 1855—too soon, alas! to see the benefits accruing to his beloved country from the wise reconciliatory policy of his dear friend Deák. His funeral was attended by more than 20,000 people, and the country provided for his family.

Whenever the poets of Hungary are mentioned the name of Petoefy will occur, and he was second to none in originality of thought and poetic utterance. An intense love of his native scenery, not excepting even the dreary boundless Alföld, afforded inspiration for his genius. His poetic temperament and pathetic story give him a certain likeness to the brave young Körner, dear to every German heart. Petoefy was engaged in editing a Hungarian translation of Shakespeare when he was interrupted by the political events of 1848. His pen and sword were alike devoted to the cause of patriotism, and entering the army under General

Bem, he became his adjutant and secretary. During the memorable winter campaign in Transylvania he wrote proclamations and warlike songs. We all know the story of the Russian invasion of Transylvania at Austria's appeal, and how the brave Hungarians fought and fell at the battle of Schässburg. This engagement took place on the 31st of July '49. Petoefy was present, and indeed had been seen in the thick of the fight; but in the evening he was missing from the roll-call, and, strange to say, his remains, though searched for, were never identified. The mystery which hung over his fate caused many romantic stories to be circulated, and not a few claimants to his name and fame have arisen. Even within the last three months a report has reached his native village that he had been seen in the mines of Siberia, where he has been kept a prisoner all these years by the Russians!

The language of the Magyars was heard not in poetry alone, but in the sternest prose. "Hungary is not, but Hungary shall be," said Count Széchenyi. The men who worked out this problem were politicians, writers, and orators. Foremost among them may be reckoned Baron Eötvos, one of the most liberal-minded and enlightened thinkers of the day. His efforts were specially directed to improving the

education of all classes of the community. With this end and aim he worked unceasingly. He held the post of Minister of Cultus and Education in the first independent Hungarian Ministry in 1848, but withdrew in consequence of political differences with his colleagues. Again in 1867 he held the same *porte-feuille* under Count Andrassy, but died in 1870 universally regretted. His best known literary productions are two novels, 'The Carthusian' and 'The Village Notary.' The latter highly-interesting, indeed dramatic story, may be recommended to any one who desires to know what really were the sufferings entailed upon the peasantry under the old system of forced labour. It is one of those fictions which, as old Walter Savage Landor used to say, "are more true than fact." It was the 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' of that day, and of the cause he had at heart—the abolition of serfdom. In reading this most thrilling story, one can understand the evil times that gave birth to the terrible saying of the peasant, "that a lord is a lord, even in hell."

Yet it was the nobles themselves who abolished at one sweep all the privileges of their order. It was by their unanimous consent that the manumission of nearly eight millions of serfs was granted, at the same time converting the feudal

holdings of some 500,000 families into absolute freeholds.

In Hungary it would appear that public opinion is generously receptive of new impulses, and in this particular the Hungarians resemble us, as they claim to do in many things, calling themselves "the English of the East."

"It is curious," said Baroness B—— to me one day, "that with all our respect for British institutions, and everything that is English, that we fail to copy their straight good sense. We have too many talkers, too few workers. We are not yet a money-making nation; we have no idea of serious work, and our spirit for business is not yet developed. Almost all industrial or commercial enterprises are in the hands of Jews, Armenians, Greeks, who are great scoundrels generally."

"The Armenians are instinctive traders," I remarked.

"Yes, true; just as we are the very reverse. But this change has come over us. Taking again our cue from England, we see that trade can be respectable, and those who follow it are respected —with you at least. We try to *Englishify* ourselves, and some of the younger members of the community make a funny hash of it. For instance, a rich young country swell in our neighbourhood

went over to England and came back in raptures with everything, and tried to turn everything upside down at home without accommodating his new ideas to the circumstances that were firmly rooted here. You may see him now sit down to dinner with an English dresscoat over his red Hungarian waistcoat. His freaks went far beyond this, and he came to be known as the 'savage Englishman.'"

I asked my hostess if our English novels were much read.

"Everybody likes your English fiction," replied Baroness B——. "It is immensely read, and has helped to promote the knowledge of the language more perhaps than anything else. We, too, have our writers of fiction. Jokai is the most prolific, but he has got to be too much an imitator of the French school. One of his earlier novels, 'The New Landlord,' has been translated into English, and gives a good picture of Hungarian life in the transition state of things. For elegance of style he is not to be compared to Gzulai Paul and Baron Eötvos."

"There seems to be a growing interest in natural history and literature," I remarked, "judging from the enormous increase of newspapers and journals which pass through the post, both foreign and local."

"With regard to local journals," replied the Baroness, "we have the 'Osszehasonlitó irodalom-

történelmi Lapok' ('Comparative Literary Journal'), which is published at Klausenburg, at Herrmannstadt, and at Kesmark in Upper Hungary. There are Natural History Societies, who publish their reports annually. Added to this, there are few towns of any size that have not their public libraries. I speak specially of Transylvania, where we affect a higher degree of culture than in Hungary Proper."

Baroness B—— was very anxious to impress upon me that certainly in Transylvania the ladies of good society do not affect "fast" manners or style. "Very few amongst us," she said, "adopt the nasty habit of smoking cigarettes. I am very sorry that Countess A—— has attempted to introduce this fashion from Pest."

Buda-Pest, though the capital, is not the place to find the best Hungarian society. Many of the old families prefer Pressburg; and Klausenburg is to Transylvania what Edinburgh was to Scotland, socially speaking, before the days of railroads. In the season good society may be met with at the various baths, but every year the facilities of travel enable people to go farther a-field health-seeking and for pleasure.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A visit at Schloss B———National characteristics—Robber stories—Origin of the "poor lads"—Audacity of the robbers—Anecdote of Deák and the housebreaker—Romantic story of a robber chief.

THE three weeks I remained at Schloss B—— were amongst the most agreeable days I spent in Transylvania. There were a great many visitors coming and going, affording me an excellent opportunity of seeing the society of that part of Hungary. With regard to the younger generation, the Transylvanians are like well-bred people all the world over. The ladies have something of the frankness of superior Americans—the sort of Americans that Lord Lytton describes in 'The Parisians'—and in consequence conversation has more vivacity than with us.

In the elder generation you may detect far more of national peculiarity; in some cases they retain the national dress, and with it the Magyar pride and ostentation, so strongly dashed with Orientalism.

Then again, in the houses of the old nobility, one is struck by many curious incongruities. For example, Count T—— has a large retinue of servants—five cooks are hardly able at times to supply his hospitable board, so numerous are the guests—yet the walls of his rooms are simply whitewashed, and the furniture is a mixture of costly articles from Vienna and the handiwork of the village carpenter. A whole array of servants, who are in gorgeous liveries at dinner, may be seen barefooted in the morning.

In talking with some of the elderly members of the family, I heard many curious anecdotes of old Hungarian customs; but "the old order changeth" here as elsewhere, and a monotonous uniformity threatens the social world. Even as it is, everybody who entertains his friends at dinner is much the same as everybody else, be he in Monmouth or Macedon. Distinctive characteristics of race are found more easily in the common people, who are less amenable to the change of fashion than their superiors. Baroness B—— had a complete repertory of robber stories, some of which are so characteristic that I will repeat them here.

I have before alluded to the peculiarity which existed in the old system preserving to the peasant his personal freedom, though the land was burdened

with duties. It was not till 1838 that the Austrians introduced the conscription, and subsequently they carried out the law with a brutality that made the innovation thoroughly detested by the peasantry. Accustomed to their tradition of personal freedom, the forced military service in itself was regarded with intense dislike. The richer classes were enabled to pay a certain sum of money for exemption, but the poor were helpless; they were dragged from their houses and sent to distant parts of the empire, to serve for a long period of years. As cases had not unfrequently occurred of the recruits running away, they were subjected to the ignominy of being chained together in gangs; and as if this was not enough, many superfluous brutalities were inflicted by the Austrian officials.

To escape from this hated service, many a young man fled from his home in anticipation of the next levy of the conscription, and hid himself in the shepherds' *tanya* in the plain. These remote dwellings in the distant *puszta* were no bad hiding-places, and the fugitives were freely harboured by the shepherds, who shared the animosity of the "poor lads" against the Austrian conscription. In course of time these outlaws found honest work difficult to procure; they became, in short, vagabonds on the face of the earth, and ended

by forming themselves into robber bands. They had also their class grievance against the rich, who had been enabled to buy themselves off from serving in the army. The numbers of the original fugitives were soon increased by evil-doers from all sides—ruffians who had a natural bent for rapine—and a plague of robbers was the result, threatening all parts of Hungary. The mischief grew to such serious proportions, and it transpired that the robbers had everywhere accomplices in the towns and villages. Persons of apparently respectable position were suspected of favouring them; they were called "poor lads," and a glamour of patriotism was flung over the fugitives from Austrian tyranny.

During the war of independence these robber bands rallied round their elected chief, Shandor Bozsa, and actually offered their services to the Hungarian Government, as they desired to take part in the great national struggle. The Provisional Government accepted their services, and they came pouring in from every part of the country. At first they behaved very well, and in fact many of these "irregulars" distinguished themselves by acts of great valour. In the end it was the old story; they soon showed a degree of insubordination that rendered them worse than

useless to the regular army. By the time the struggle for independence had found its melancholy ending at Villagos, these fellows were again at their old tricks of horse-stealing and cattle-lifting, and they went so far as to waylay even the *honved*, the national Hungarian militia. The well-disposed part of the community was powerless to resist the robbers, for after the disastrous events of 1849 the Austrian Government prohibited the possession of firearms, even for hunting purposes, so that villages and towns, one might almost say, were at the mercy of a band of well-armed robbers. The Government were so busy hunting down political conspirators, and hanging, shooting, and imprisoning patriots, that they were indifferent to the increase of brigandage. The statistics of the political persecutions which Hungary suffered at the hands of Austria during the ten years that followed Villagos were significant. Upwards of two thousand persons were sentenced to death, nearly ten times that number were thrown into prison, and almost five thousand Hungarian patriots were driven into exile —amongst the number Deák, the yet-to-be saviour of his country.

But to return to the robbers. They had spread themselves over the whole land; from the forests of Bakony to Transylvania, from the Carpathians to

the Danube, no place was free from these desperate marauders. They committed incredible deeds of boldness. On one occasion seven or eight robbers attacked a caravan of thirty waggons in the neighbourhood of Szegedin, the cavalcade being on its way to the fair in that town. The traders were without a single firearm amongst them, so that the fully-armed brigands effected their purpose, though it was broad daylight. Another time they entered a market town in Transylvania and coolly demanded that the broken wheel of their waggon should be mended, threatening to shoot down anybody who offered the slightest opposition. The post was frequently stopped, but it came to be remarked, that though the passengers were generally killed, the drivers escaped. This, together with the fact that the post was always stopped when there were large sums of money in course of transit, led the authorities to suspect that their employés were in collusion with the robbers, and subsequent events proved this to be the case.

When the hostility of Austria had somewhat cooled down, the dangerous up-growth of these robber bands attracted the serious attention of the Government, and not only *gendarmerie* but military force were employed against them. The officials to a man were Germans and Bohemians, indifferently

honest, and hated by the peasantry, who, after all, preferred a Hungarian robber to an Austrian official. The consequence was that they were not by any means very ready to depose against the "poor lads," and the Government found themselves unequal to cope with the difficulty, so things went from bad to worse.

In 1867, when at last the reconciliation policy of Deák had effected a substantial peace with Austria, the Hungarian Constitution being re-established, and the towns and *comitats* (counties) having got back their prerogatives and self-government, the intolerable evil of brigandage was at once brought before the attention of the Parliament assembled at Buda-Pest. There were a great many speeches made upon the subject, and Count Forgács with a considerable military force was despatched to Zala and the adjoining country against the robbers. He simply drove them out of one part of the country to carry on their devastations in another, and dreadful robberies and murders were reported from Szegedin. On several occasions the post was stopped, and the passengers were invariably killed. They even stopped the railway train one day at Péteri.

Government were now obliged to take stronger measures. They recalled Count Forgács, and

despatched Count Rádaz as Royal Commissary with augmented powers, Parliament in the mean time voting a grant of 60,000 florins for the purpose.

The energetic measures taken by Count Rádaz led to some remarkable disclosures. He discovered that tradesmen, magistrates, and other employés in towns and villages were in communication with the brigands, and in fact shared the booty. It came to be remarked that certain persons returned suddenly to their homes after a mysterious absence, which corresponded with the commission of some desperate outrage in another part of the country.

In the space of fifteen months Count Rádaz had to deal with nearly six hundred cases of capital offences, and no less than two hundred of the malefactors were condemned to the gallows.

"Wherever they can the peasants will shelter the 'poor lads' from the law," said my friend. "It happened only last spring in our neighbourhood that a robber had been tracked to a village, but though this had happened on several occasions, yet the authorities failed to find him. It was known that he had a sweetheart there, a handsome peasant girl, who was herself a favourite with everybody. One day, however, the soldiers discovered him hidden in a hay-loft. There was a terrible struggle;

the robber, discharging his revolver, killed one man and wounded another. At length he was secured, strongly bound, and placed in a waggon to be conveyed to the nearest fortress. When passing through a wood the convoy was set upon by a lot of women, who flung flowers into the waggon, and a little farther on a rescue was attempted; but the military were in strong force, and the villagers had to content themselves with loud expressions of sympathy for the 'poor lad.' He was, in truth, a handsome, gallant young fellow—open-handed, generous to the poor, and with the courage of a lion—just the sort of hero for a mischievous romance."

The following story, related by my friend Baroness B——, proves that there were men amongst these outlaws who were not destitute of patriotic feeling. In the year 1867 a band of "poor lads" surprised a country gentleman's house by night. It was their habit to ask for money and valuables, and woe betide those who refused, unless they were strong enough to resist the demand. Horrible atrocities were committed by these miscreants, who have been known to torture the inhabitants of lonely dwellings, finishing their brutal work by setting fire to house and homestead.

On the occasion above named the robber band consisted of more than a dozen well-armed men,

and as the household was but small, resistance was out of the question. They made a forcible entrance, and were going the round of every room in the house, collecting all valuables of a portable nature, when it chanced that they entered the guest-chamber, that had for its occupant no less a person than the great patriot Francis Deák. The intruders instantly pounced on a very handsome gold watch lying on a table near the bedside. Mr Deák, thus rudely disturbed, awoke to the unpleasant fact that his much-prized watch was in the hands of the robbers. Giving them credit for some feelings of patriotism, he simply told them who he was, adding that the watch was the keepsake of a dear departed friend, and begged they would restore it to him. On hearing his name the chief immediately handed the watch back, apologising "very much for breaking in on the repose of honoured Mr Deák, whom they held in so much respect," adding "that the nature of their occupation obliged them to make use of the hours of the night for their work."

The chance of interviewing Mr Deák was not to be neglected, so the robber chief sat down by the bedside of the statesman and had a chat about political affairs, and finally took his leave with many expressions of respect. Not an article of Mr Deák's was touched; they even contented them-

selves with a very moderate amount of black-mail from the master of the house, and no one was personally injured in any way.

My next story is a very romantic one; it was related to me by an English friend who was travelling in Hungary as long ago as 1846, when the circumstance had recently occurred. It seems that in those days a certain lady, the widow of a wealthy magnate, inhabited a lonely castle not far from the principal route between Buda and Vienna. She received one morning a polite note requesting her to provide supper at ten o'clock that night for twelve gentlemen! She knew at once the character of her self-invited guests, and devised a novel mode of defence. Some people would have sent post-haste to the nearest town for help, but the *châtelaine* could easily divine that every road from the castle would be watched to prevent communication, so she made her own plans.

At ten o'clock up rode an armed band, twelve men in all; immediately the gate of the outer court and the entrance door were thrown open, as if for the most honoured and welcome guests. The lady of the castle herself stood in the entrance to receive them, richly dressed as if for an entertainment. She at once selected the chief, bade him welcome, gave orders that their horses should be well cared

for, and then taking the arm of her guest, she led him into the dining-hall. Here a goodly feast was spread, the tables and sideboard being covered with a magnificent display of gold and silver plate, the accumulation of many generations.

The leader of the robber band started back surprised, but immediately recovering his presence of mind, he seated himself calmly by the side of his charming hostess, who soon engaged him in conversation about the gay world of Vienna, whose doings were perfectly familiar to them both. At length, when the feast was nearly ended, the chief took out his watch and said, "Madame, the happiest moments of my life have always been the shortest. I have another engagement this night, but before I leave allow me to tell you that in appealing to my honour, as you have done to-night, you have saved me from the commission of a crime. Bad as I am, none ever appealed to my honour in vain. As for you, my men," he said, looking sternly round with his hand on his pistol, "I charge you to take nothing from this house; he who disobeys me dies that instant."

The chief then asked for pen and paper, and writing some sentences in a strange character, handed it to his hostess, saying, "If you or your retainers should at any time lose anything of value,

let that paper be displayed in the nearest town, and I pledge you my word the missing articles shall be returned." After this he took his leave, the troop mounted their horses and departed.

My friend told me that he was enabled to verify the story; and he subsequently discovered the real name of the robber chief. He was an impoverished cadet of one of the noblest families in Hungary. His fate was sad enough; he was captured a few months after this incident, and ended his life under the hands of the common hangman.

CHAPTER XXX.

Return to Buda-Pest — All-Souls' Day — The cemetery — Secret burial of Count Louis Batthyanyi—High rate of mortality at Buda-Pest.

SOME matters of business recalled me to Buda-Pest in the midst of a round of visits in Transylvania. The great hospitality of my new friends would have rendered a winter in that delightful country most agreeable, but the holiday part of my tour was over, and circumstances led me to pass some months in the capital.

I got back just in time for All-Souls' Day. The *Fête des Morts* is observed with great ceremony throughout Hungary, especially at Buda-Pest. In the afternoon of this day a friend and myself joined the throng, who were with one accord making their way eastward along the Radial Strasse, the great thoroughfare of Pest. It appeared as if the whole population of the town had turned out; private carriages, tramways, droskies alike were all crammed, driving in the same direction with the ceaseless stream of pedestrians. It was the day for

the living to visit their dead! Attired in black, almost every one carried a funeral wreath; even the poorest and the humblest were taking some floral offering to their beloved ones who sleep for evermore in the great cemetery.

There is a dynamic force in the sympathy of a crowd. I had the sensation of being carried along with the moving masses, without the exercise of my own will, I hardly know how one could have turned back. And on we went, the light of the short winter day meanwhile fading quickly into the gloom of night. Once beyond the gaslighted streets, the sense of darkness in the midst of the surging multitude was oppressive and unnatural. We were borne on towards the principal gate of the cemetery, and here the effect was most striking. We left the outer darkness, and stepped into an area of light; beyond the belt of cypress and of yew there was so brilliant an illumination that it threw its glowing reflection on the clouds that hung pall-like over the whole city.

In all that crowded cemetery—and it is crowded—there was not a single grave without its lights. The most ordinary had rows of candles marking the simple form of the gravestone; but there were costlier tombs, with an array of lamps in banks of flowers beautifully arranged; and in the mausoleum

of Batthyanyi the illuminations were effected by gas in the form of architectural lines of light. At this point the crowd was greatest. To visit the tomb of the martyred statesman is deemed a patriotic duty. The particulars relating to the disposal of Count Batthyanyi's body after his judicial murder in 1849 are not very generally known; the facts are as follows.

At the close of hostilities in 1849, Haynau, commissioned by the Vienna Government, condemned people to death with unsparing barbarity—it was a way the Austrians had of stamping out insurrections. Amongst their victims was Count Louis Batthyanyi, some time President of the Hungarian Diet. Haynau wanted to have him hung at the gallows, but he was mercifully shot at Pest on the 6th October 1849. It is said that the infamous Haynau was nearly mad with rage that his noble victim escaped the last indignity of hanging. His remains were ordered to be buried in a nameless coffin in the burial-ground of the common criminals, and for many years it was supposed that he had received no other sepulchre. This was not so, however, for two priests who were greatly attached to the magnate's family procured possession of his body, and secretly conveyed it to the church in the Serviten Gasse, where they built up the coffin in

the wall, and carefully preserved it for years. When the reconciliation with Austria took place, concealment being no longer necessary, they revealed their secret. The coffin was then opened, and it was found that the features of the unfortunate Batthyanyi had been singularly well preserved. Several who had fought for freedom by his side in 1848 looked once more on the face of their leader. The subsequent funeral in the new cemetery was made the occasion of a very marked display of patriotic feeling. Later an imposing monument was erected, but Count Batthyanyi's best and most enduring monument is the part he took in the emancipation of the serfs.

Turning aside from the public demonstrations around the tombs of poets and patriots, we wandered down the more secluded alleys of the cemetery. In a lonely spot, quite away from the crowd and the glare, we came upon an exquisite little plot of garden with growing flowers, shrubs, and cypress-trees, tended, one could see, with loving care, "and in the garden there is a sepulchre." I shall not easily forget the look of ineffable grief visible on the face of an elderly man who was arranging and rearranging the lights round and about the family grave. We noticed that the names on the slab were those of a wife and

mother, followed by her children, several of them, sons and daughters, the dates of their decease being terribly close one upon another. I had a conviction that the lonely man we saw there was the only survivor of his family; I feel sure it must have been so. It was very touching the way in which he (aimlessly, it seemed to me) moved first this light and then the other, or grouped them together around the vases of sweet flowers that decked the graves. It was all that remained for him to do for his beloved ones; and we could see the poor man was vainly occupying himself, lingering on, unwilling to leave the spot!

We had not much fancy for returning amongst the patriotic crowd gathered about the gaslighted Valhalla, so we made our way out.

We English must have our say about statistics whenever there is a wedding or a funeral, and as a fact Buda-Pest comes out very badly in its death-rate. It is only within the last two or three years that they have taken to publish the comparative returns of the capital cities of Europe, and now it appears that Buda-Pest is in the unenviable position of having on an average the highest death-rate of any European town! By some this is attributed to the great excess of infant mortality—consolatory for the grown-up people, as reducing

their risk; but the children, who die like flies before they are twelve months old, may say with the epitaph in the country churchyard—

> "If then we so soon were done for,
> What the deuce were we begun for?"

I do not speak as one with authority, but duly-qualified persons tell me that nursery reform is much needed in Hungary. I know not what it is they do with the children, only it seems the system is wrong somewhere, as the bills of mortality clearly testify.

Then, again, the position of Pest is not healthy; it lies low, indeed some part of the city is built on the old bed of the Danube. The drainage, however, is very much improved of late years, and the magnificent river embankments have done much to obviate the malaria arising from mud-banks.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Skating—Death and funeral of Deák—Deák's policy—Uneasiness about the rise of the Danube—Great excitement about inundations—The capital in danger—Night scene on the embankment—Firing the danger-signal—The great calamity averted.

THE winter is usually a very pleasant season at Buda-Pest. There is plenty of amusement; in fact, during the carnival, parties, balls, and concerts succeed one another without cessation. The Hungarians dance as though it were an exercise of patriotism; with them it is no languid movement half deprecated by the utilitarian soul — it is a passion whirling them into ecstasy. But dancing was not the only diversion. The winter I was at Buda-Pest a long spell of enduring frost gave us some capital skating. The fashionable society meet for this amusement in the park, where there is a piece of ornamental water about five acres in extent. Here the Skating Club have established themselves, having erected a handsome pavilion at the side of the lake to serve as a clubhouse.

From time to time *fêtes* are given on the ice. I

was present on more than one occasion, and I must say it would be difficult to imagine a more animated or a prettier scene. The Hungarians always display great taste in their arrangements for festive gatherings. During the gay carnival of 1876 "all went merry as a marriage-bell" till the sad news spread that the great patriot Deák was sick unto death. Then we heard that he had passed away from our midst—I say "our midst," for Hungary throws a glamour over the stranger that is within her gates, and, moved by irresistible sympathy, you are led to rejoice in her joy and mourn with her in her sorrow.

Buda-Pest presented on the day of Deák's funeral a scene never to be forgotten. It was a whole people mourning for their friend—their safe guide in time of trouble, the statesman who of all others had planted a firm basis of future prosperity.

Francis Deák was endowed with that rare gift of persuasion which can appeal to hostile parties, and in the end unite them in common patriotic action. Any one who has attentively considered the state of parties in Hungary during the last decade will know with what irreconcilable elements the great statesman had to deal. To the Magyars he said, "He who will be free himself must be just to others;" while to the Slavs he said,

"Labour with us, that we may labour for you." "Reconciliation" and "compromise" with Austria were the most unpopular words that could be uttered at that time, yet Deák bravely spoke them in his famous open letter on Easter day 1865. He continued his calm and steady appeal to public opinion till his patriotic efforts were rewarded by the close of that long-standing strife between the Hungarian people and their king.

On the day of the funeral the ground was white with snow, the cold was intense, but a vast concourse of people followed Deák to his grave. On the road to the cemetery every house was hung with black, the city was really and truly in mourning; and well it might be, for their great peacemaker was dead, the man who beyond all others of his generation had the power to restrain the impatient enthusiasm of his countrymen by wise counsels that had grown almost paternal in their gentle influence.

While we were still thinking and talking of Deák's political career, a very present cause for anxiety arose in reference to the state of the Danube. The annual breaking up of the ice is always anticipated with uneasiness, for during this century no less than thirteen serious inundations have occurred. This year there was reason

for alarm, for early in January the level of the river was unusually high, and a further rise had taken place, unprecedented at that season.

The greatest disaster of the kind on record took place in 1838, when the greater part of Pest was inundated, and something like four thousand houses were churned up in the flood; nor was this all, for the loss of life had been very considerable, owing to the sudden nature of the calamity on that occasion. The recollection of this terrible disaster within the living memory of many persons kept the inhabitants of Buda-Pest very keenly alive to any abnormal rise of the Danube waters. There were, besides, additional circumstances which created uneasiness and led to very acrimonious discussions. In recent years certain "rectifications" had been effected in the course of the Danube, which one-half of the community averred would for ever prevent the chance of any recurrence of the catastrophe of 1838. But there are always two parties in every question—"Little-endians" and "Big-endians"—and a great many people were of opinion that these very "rectifications" were, in fact, an additional source of peril to the capital.

The case stands thus: the river, left to its own devices, separates below Pest into two branches, called respectively the Soroksár and the Promontar;

these branches continue their course independently of each other for a distance of about fifty-seven kilometres, forming the great island of Csepel, which has an average width of about five kilometres. By certain embankments on the Soroksár branch the *régime* of the river has been disturbed, and according to the opinion of M. Révy, a French engineer,[1] this has been a grave mistake, and he thinks that the Danube misses her former channel of Soroksár more and more. He further remarks in the very strongest terms upon an engineering operation "which proposes the amputation of a vital limb, conveying about one-third of the power and life of a giant river when in flood—a step which has no parallel in the magnitude of its consequences in any river with which I am acquainted."

Now let us see which side the Danube took in the controversy in the spring of 1876. On the 17th of February the public mind had been almost tranquillised by the gradual fall of the water-level, but appearances changed very rapidly on the morning of the 18th, for alarming intelligence came to Buda-Pest from the Upper Danube. It seems that a sudden rise of temperature had melted the vast deposits of snow in the mountains of the Tyrol and

[1] The Danube at Buda-Pest. Report addressed to Count Andrassy by J. J. Révy, C.E. 1876.

other high ranges which send down their tributary waters to the Danube. A telegram from Passau announced the startling news that the waters of the Inn had risen eleven feet since the afternoon of the previous day, and further news came that the Danube had risen twelve and a half feet in the same time. Following close upon this came intelligence of a disastrous inundation at Vienna which had caused loss of life and property. The boats and barges in the winter harbour of the Austrian capital had been dragged from their anchorage, covering the river with the *débris* of wreckage; in short, widespread mischief was reported generally from the Upper Danube.

There was a prevalent idea that Buda-Pest had been saved by the flood breaking bounds at Vienna, but events proved that our troubles were yet to come. There was a peculiarity in the thaw of this spring which told tremendously against us. It came westward—viz., down stream instead of up stream, as it usually does. This state of things greatly increased the chances of flood in the middle Danube, as the descending volume of water and ice-blocks found the lower part of the river still frozen and inert. Even up to the 21st the daily rise in the river was only six inches, and if the large floes of ice which passed the town had only gone on their

course without interruption all might still have been well. Unfortunately, however, this was far from being the case. It seems that at Eresi, a few miles below Buda-Pest, where the water is shallow, the ice had formed into a compact mass for the space of six miles, and at this point the down-drifting ice-blocks got regularly stacked, rising higher and higher, till the whole vast volume of water was bayed back upon the twin cities of Buda and Pest, the latter place being specially endangered by its site on the edge of the great plain.

The authorities now devised plans for clearing away this ice-barrier, which acted as an impediment to the flow of the river. They tried to blow it up by means of dynamite, but all to no purpose; and it soon became apparent that the danger to the capital was hourly on the increase. At Pest the excitement and alarm became intense, for the mighty waters were visibly and inexorably rising. We saw the steps of the quay disappear one after another; then the whole subway of the embankment became engulfed. Ominous cracks appeared in the asphaltic promenade of the Corso, and the public were warned not to approach the railings, lest they should give way bodily and fall over into the water, which was lapping at the stonework. The "High-Water Commission" found it necessary

to close all the drains, and steam-pumps were brought into requisition; the town was in fact besieged by water, and the enemy was literally at the gates. The ordinary business of life was suspended. The greeting in the street was not, "Good-day; how are you?" but, "What of the Danube?" "Do you know the last reading of the register?" "Does the water still rise?"

"Still rising"—this was always the answer. On the morning of the 23d the river had risen upwards of two feet in twenty-four hours. Hundreds of people now thought seriously of flight from the doomed city. There was a complete exodus to the heights behind Buda. The suspension bridge was crowded day and night by the citizens, carrying with them their wives, their children, and a miscellaneous collection of valuables. In the town the shopkeepers removed their goods to the upper stories, plastering up the doors and windows of the basement with cement; and careful householders laid in provisions for several days' consumption. The authorities had enough on their hands; amongst other things they had to provide means of rescue, if necessary, for the inhabitants of Old Buda, New Pest, and other low-lying quarters. The names of all public buildings standing on higher levels, or otherwise suitable as places of refuge,

were notified in the event of a catastrophe. Boats also were drawn up on the Corso and in some of the squares. From the want of these precautions there had resulted that lamentable loss of life in 1838.

Furthermore, the public were to be informed when the danger became imminent by the firing of cannon-shots from the citadel on the lofty Blocksberg, which dominates the town on the Buda side. The day of the 24th had been wild and stormy, the evening was intensely dark; but notwithstanding, thousands, nay half Pest, crowded the river-bank. For hours this surging multitude moved hither and thither on the Corso, drawn together by the sense of common danger and distress.

I was there amongst the rest, peering into the darkness. My brother's arm was linked in mine, and we stood for some time on the Corso, just above the fruit-market, facing Buda; but nothing, not even the outline of the hills, was visible in the thick, black darkness of the night. "Ah! what is that?—look!" cried my brother, with a pressure of the arm that sent an electric shock through my body. Yes, sure enough, there was a flash of fire high up on the Blocksberg that made a rift in the darkness; and then, before we had time for speech, there came a sharp, ringing, detonating sound that made every window in the Corso rattle again.

Once, twice, thrice the booming cannon roared out its terrible warning. It was the appointed signal, and we all knew that now the waters had risen so high that Old Buda and other low-lying districts were in danger.

That was a terrible night. The general excitement was intense, and there were few people, I imagine, in all Pest who slept quietly in their beds. Every hour news came of the spread of the inundation. The waters were pouring in behind Pest from the upper bend of the river. Matters looked very serious indeed. All communication with the suburb of New Pest was cut off by the inroads of the flood. The night, with its pall of darkness, seemed interminable; but at length the morning came, and—God help us!—what a sea of trouble the light revealed! Whole districts under water; churches and palaces knee-deep in the flood; and above Pest — a widespread lake creeping on over the vast plain.

The only news of the morning was a despairing telegram from Eresi that the barrier of ice there was immovable. This meant, as I have said before, that there was no release for the pent-up waters in the ordinary course. The accumulated flood must swamp the capital, and that soon. The river had ceased to flow past; it was no longer the "blue

Danube" running merrily its five miles an hour, but a dead sea, an inexorable volume of water, slowly, silently creeping up to engulf us. Pest is a city which literally has its foundations made on the sand; a portion of it is built on the old bed of the Danube. Assuming a certain point as zero, the official measurements were made from this, and notices were published that if a maximum of twenty-five feet were attained by the rising waters, then Pest must inevitably be flooded.

As evening came on, with the cloudy forecast of more rain, the gravest anxiety was visible on the face of every soul of that vast multitude. This anxiety was intensified when it was announced that the latest measurement was twenty-four feet nine inches; and what was simply appalling, that the register marked six inches rise in less than an hour. It was clear to every one that the critical moment had arrived. There was little to hope, and much to fear. Darkness fell upon as dismal a scene as imagination could well conceive. If the water once overlapped the embankment at the fruit-market, it must very soon pour in in vast volume; for the streets there are considerably lower than the level of the Corso—as it was, several large blocks of ice had floated or slid over on the quay. At this spot a serious catastrophe was apprehended.

I think it must have been ten o'clock (my friends and I had just taken a hasty supper) when the fortress on the Blocksberg again belched forth its terrible sound of warning. This time there were six shots fired; this was the signal of "Pest in danger." A profound impression of alarm fell on the assembled multitude. Some went about wringing their hands; others left the Corso hastily, going home, I imagine, to tell their women to prepare for the worst. I was unconscious at the time of taking note of things passing round me, and it seems strange, considering the acute tension of my nerves, that I saw, and can now recall with persistent accuracy, a lot of trivial and utterly unimportant incidents that happened in the crowd. I remember the size and colour of a dog that manifested his share in the common excitement by running perpetually between everybody's legs, and I could draw the face of a frightened child whom I saw clinging to its mother's skirts.

We never quitted the Corso. Though this was the third night we had not taken off our clothes, it was impossible to think of rest now. I felt no fatigue, and I hardly know how the last hour or two passed, but I heard distinctly above the murmur of voices the town clocks strike twelve. Just afterwards, a man running at full speed broke through the crowd,

shouting as he went, "The water is falling! the water is falling!" He spoke in German, so I understood the words directly. There was great excitement to ascertain if the report was correct. Thank God! he spoke words of truth. The gauge actually marked a decrease of no less than two inches in the height of the river, and this decrease had taken place in the space of half an hour. The river had attained the highest point when the danger-signal was fired. It had never risen beyond, though the level had been stationary for some time.

Every one was surprised at the rapid fall of the Danube; it was difficult to account for. It soon came to be remarked that the vast volume of water was visibly moved onward. If the river was flowing on its way, that meant the salvation of the city—the fact was most important. I myself saw a dark mass—a piece of wreckage, probably, or the carcass of an animal—pass with some rapidity across a track of light reflected on the water. It was difficult to make out anything clearly in the darkness, but I felt sure the object, whatever it was, was borne onward by the stream.

It was a generally-expressed opinion that something must have happened farther down the river to relieve the pent-up waters. Very shortly official news arrived, and spread like wildfire, that

the Danube had made a way for itself right acr
the island of Csepel into the Soroksár arm of
river.

Csepel is an island some thirty miles lo
situated a short distance below Pest. The engine
ing works for the regulation of the Danube had,
I said before, closed this Soroksár branch, and
river, in reasserting its right of way to the s
caused a terrible calamity to the villages on
Csepel Island, but thereby Hungary's capital
saved.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Results of the Danube inundations—State of things at Baja—Terrible condition of New Pest—Injuries sustained by the island garden of St. Marguerite—Charity organisation.

THOUGH Buda-Pest had escaped the worst of the threatened calamity, the state of the low-lying suburbs of the town on both sides of the river was very serious, and, as it turned out, weeks elapsed before the waters entirely subsided. The extent of the Danube inundations in 1876 was far greater than the flood of 1838; the latter was localised to Buda-Pest, where, from the suddenness of the catastrophe, the sacrifice of life was far greater than at present. But on this occasion the mischief was wide spread indeed. From Passau to Orsova the banks of the Danube were more or less flooded. The havoc below Pest was wellnigh incalculable. The river had in places spread itself out like a small sea, inundating lands already in seed; this was specially the case at Paks, where both banks of the river are equally low—as a rule, the left side was the more flooded the whole way along.

At Baja the destruction to property was most serious. Some very important works had just been completed, and these were all swept away two days after the Danube had burst over the Csepel Island at Pest. It is a matter of interest to note the travelling rate of the flood, which from being ice-clogged was less rapid than one would suppose. Baja is 120 miles below Pest.

The works here referred to were in parts a canal, to feed the old Francis Canal, which connects the Danube and Theiss, in order to prevent the stoppage of traffic, unavoidable at low water. The water and ice brought down by the flood hurled themselves with such force against the closed gates of the canal that they were burst open, and a masonry wall 7 feet in thickness and 250 in length was entirely overthrown. This incident, together with many others, helps to illustrate the action of water in flood as a factor in certain geological changes—the gorge of Kasan, to wit, where the Danube has broken through the Carpathian chain.

In the course of little more than a day the waters at Buda-Pest had fallen two and a half feet; but afterwards the fall was very slow indeed, which circumstance greatly protracted the misery of the unfortunate inhabitants of Old Buda and New Pest, the two districts most seriously compromised.

Joining a relief party, I went in a pontoon to visit New Pest. Vast blocks of ice were lying heaped up amidst the *débris* of the ruin they had made; whole terraces and streets were only distinguishable by lines of rubbish somewhat raised above the flood: the devastation was complete.

On our way to the pontoon we passed a tongue of land which had not been submerged, with a few houses intact. In this street, if it may be so called, a crowd of more than a hundred women was collected; these were mostly seated on boxes or other fragments of furniture that had been saved; one and all had their faces turned towards the waste of waters, where their homes had been. I shall never forget their looks of mute despair; there was no crying, no noise, their very silence was a gauge of the utter misery that had befallen them.

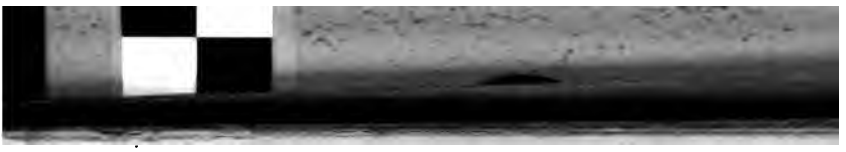
The sea of trouble in which we found ourselves was strewn with wreckage of all kinds, including the bodies of many domestic animals. Doubtless many lives were lost; it will perhaps never be known how many. It was unfortunate that no service was organised for saving life at the bridges. Several lamentable accidents and loss of life took place owing to the drifting away of boats and barges up stream. A friend of mine saw a barge with four men on board jammed in between blocks of ice, and

hurried under the suspension bridge and down the stream. No one was able to respond to the heart-rending appeals of the men, who very probably might have been saved if simply ropes had been hanging from the bridge. I myself saw a poor fellow perish in those churning waters; it was terrible to think of his thus drowning in the presence of thousands of fellow-creatures.

The amount of wreckage that passed Buda-Pest gave one some idea of the frightful amount of damage higher up the stream; there were heaps of barrels, woodstacks, trees, furniture, and even houses with their chimneys standing!

The beautiful island of St. Marguerite, just above Buda-Pest, suffered most severely. It was four feet under water; and the drift ice did immense damage to the trees, causing abrasions of the bark at eight to ten feet above the ground.

It may well be imagined that the Charity Organisation Committee had enough on their hands. Nearly 20,000 people sought the shelter provided in the public buildings and other places appointed by the authorities, and for fully a month after the catastrophe thousands had to be fed daily at the public expense.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

Expedition to the Marmaros Mountains—Railways in Hungary—The train stopping for a rest—The Alföld—Shepherds of the plain—Wild appearance of the Rusniacks—Slavs of Northern Hungary—Marmaros Szigeth—Difficulty in slinging a hammock—The Jews of Karasconfalu—Soda manufactory at Boeska—Romantic scenery—Salt mines—Subterranean lake.

THE spring was already melting into summer—and the melting process is pretty rapid in Hungary—when an opportunity occurred enabling me to visit the north-eastern part of the country with a friend who was going to the Marmaros Mountains on business. Even this wild and remote district is not without railway communication, and we took our tickets for Szigeth, in the county of Marmaros, learning at the same time, to our great satisfaction, that we could go straight on to our destination without stopping. Though my friend is a Hungarian the route was as new to him as to myself.

The railway system has been enormously extended in this country during the last ten years. In Transylvania, in the Tokay Hegyalia, in the Zipsland, and in the mining district of Schemnitz a whole net-

work of lines has been opened up. Our route from Debreczin to Szigeth is one of those recently opened. The railway statistics of Hungary are very significant of progress. In 1864 only 1903 kilometres were open, whereas ten years later the figures had risen to 6392 kilometres; and the extension has been very considerable even subsequently, though enterprise of every kind received a check in 1873, from which the country has not yet recovered.

I confess I was very glad to have come in for the days of the iron horse, for it would be difficult to imagine anything more tiresome than a drive on ordinary wheels across the vast Hungarian plain. It is so utterly featureless as to be even without landmarks. Except for the signs of the heavenly bodies, a man might, in a fit of absence, turn round and fail to realise whether he was going backwards or forwards. Right or left, it is all the same monotonous dead level, with scarce an object on which to rest the eye. Here and there a row of acacia-trees may be seen marking the boundary of an estate, and near by the sure indication of a well in the form of a lofty pole balanced transversely; but even this does not help you, for "grove nods at grove," and what you have just seen on the right-hand side is sure somehow to be repeated on the left, so you are all at sea again.

Sometimes a mirage deludes the traveller in the Hungarian plain with the fair presentment of a lake fringed with forest-trees; but the semblance fades into nothingness, and he finds himself still in an endless waste, "without a mark, without a bound." Dreary, inexpressibly dreary to all save those who are born within its limits; for, strange to say, they love their level plain as well, every bit as well, as the mountaineer loves his cloud-capped home.

This plain—the Alföld, as it is called—comprises an area of 37,400 square miles, composed chiefly of rich black soil underlain by water-worn gravel—a significant fact for geologists. It is worthy of remark that the Magyar race is here found in its greatest purity. Here the followers of Arpad settled themselves to the congenial life of herdsmen. At the railway stations one generally sees a lot of these shepherds from the *puszta*, each with his axe-headed staff and sheepskin cloak, worn the woolly side outwards if the weather is hot. They can be scented from afar, and their scent, of all bad smells, is one of the worst. The fact is, the shepherds keep their bodies well covered with grease to prevent injurious effects from the very sudden changes of temperature so common in all Hungary. This smearing of the skin with grease

is also a defence against insects, which seems probable, if insects have noses to be offended.

Nowhere does the intrusion of modern art and its appliances strike one more curiously by force of contrast than in the wilder parts of Hungary. Just outside the railway station life and manners are what they were two centuries ago, and yet here are the grappling-irons of civilisation. No doubt a change will come to all this substratum of humanity, but it takes time. Even the railways in these wilder parts have not exactly settled themselves down to the inexorable limits of "time tables." It occurred on this very journey that we stopped at some small station, for no particular reason as far as I could see, for nobody got in or out; but the heat was intense, and so we just made a halt of nearly an hour. I could not make out what was up at first, but looking out I saw the stokers, pokers, and engine-driver all calmly enjoying their pipes, seated on the footboard on the shady side of the train! Some one or two people remarked that the officials in this part of the world were lazy fellows, but the passengers generally appeared in no great hurry, and after a while the train moved on again. At several places on the line we passed luggage trains waiting on the siding for their turn to be sent on to Buda-Pest. In many of these

open trucks we noticed a considerable number of those fine Podolian oxen, common in these parts, and lots of woolly-haired pigs, that look for all the world like sheep at a distance.

The effect of tapping these out-lying districts is already producing its natural result; the cultivator finds a ready market for his produce, and the value of land is rising, and "*must* rise in Hungary," says Professor Wrightson in his report on the agriculture of the Austro-Hungarian empire.[1]

In approaching Debreczin we noticed frequent instances of the efflorescence of soda-salts upon the surface of the soil. This occurrence greatly impairs the fertility of some parts of the Alföld. Land drainage would probably cure this evil, but I do not fancy any serious experiments have been tried. Skill and labour have not yet been brought to bear on the greater part of the land in Hungary. It is a country where a vast deal has yet to be done, and such are the prejudices of the common people that improvements cannot be introduced at once and without some caution; in fact, the material conditions of the country itself and the climate necessitate considerable experience on the part of any foreigner who may settle in Hungary and think to import new fashions in agriculture.

[1] Journal of Agricultural Society, vol. x. Part xi. No. xx.

Stopping at Debreczin only long enough to get a little supper at the station restaurant, we pursued our journey through the night. I do not imagine that we lost much that was worthy of note owing to the darkness, for the line continues to traverse a sandy plain utterly devoid of good scenery. Towards morning we passed two important towns—namely, Nagy Károly and Szathmár. The latter is the seat of a Catholic bishop, and has no less than 19,000 inhabitants—a good-sized place for Hungary. In 1711 the peace between the Austrians and Rákoczy was signed in this town. Not far from here are the celebrated gold, silver, and lead mines of Nagy Banya.

We arrived at the junction station of Kiraly-haza early in the morning, and there learned the agreeable news that we must wait ten hours, though only a few miles from our destination. From this place there is a line to Sátoralja-Uihely, a junction on the main line between Buda-Pest and Lemberg. The town of Kiraly-haza is situated in a wide valley bounded by high mountains. The plain is left far behind, and we are once more under the shadow of the Carpathians. The heat of the day was intense, and there was not much in the immediate neighbourhood to tempt us out in the broiling sun, so we just got through the time as best we could. The food was

very bad and the wine execrable, an adulterated mixture not worthy of the name. This is a rare occurrence in Hungary, and it ought not to have been the case here, for there are good vineyards close to the town.

It was getting towards evening before our train appeared, and when it stopped at the station as wild a looking crew turned out of the carriages as I ever remember to have seen. On inquiry I found that these people were Rusniacks. Their occupation at this time of the year is to convey rafts down the Theiss. It seems their work was done, and they were returning by train. After the halt of ten minutes, and when the passengers were resuming their seats, I found that these fellows were all crowded into some empty horse-boxes attached to the train. The officials treated them as if they were very little better than cattle. These people, with their shoeless feet encased in thongs of leather, with garments unconscious of the tailor's art, and in some instances regardless of the primary object of clothes as a human institution, were the most uncivilised of any I had yet seen in Hungary.

These Rusniacks, or "Little Russians," as they are called, are tolerably numerous—not less than 470,000, according to statistical returns. They are to be found almost exclusively in the north-east of

Hungary. They were fugitives in the old days from Russia, to whom they are intensely antagonistic, having probably suffered from her persecutions. In religion they are dissenters from the orthodox Greek Church, assimilating more with Roman Catholicism. These people are another variety in the strange mixture of races to be found in Hungary. It is thought, and it would seem probable, that the very fact of the military conscription will help to civilise these Rusniacks by drawing them out of their savage isolation in the wild valleys of the Marmaros Mountains.

There are many peculiarities respecting the races inhabiting the northern parts of Hungary. It would be a great mistake to put the Slavs of the north in the same category with the Slavs of the south: the former are on far better terms with the Magyars; they are for the most part contented, hard-working people, not troubling themselves at all about Panslavism. The reason is not far to seek. The Slovacks, as they are called by way of distinction, numbering about two millions, do not belong to the Greek Church. The greater proportion are Roman Catholics, the rest Lutherans and Calvinists. Many of the Catholics are said to be descended from refugees who fled from the tyranny of the Greek Church in Polish Russia.

After leaving Kiraly-haza we got into charming scenery. As we approached the Carpathians we passed through vast oak-forests, and here and there had a glimpse of the Theiss rushing along over its stony bed. Occasionally we caught sight of herds of buffaloes bathing in the river. It is difficult to imagine that these fierce-looking creatures, with their massive shaggy heads, can ever be tractable; yet they can be managed, though only by kindness—"the rod of correction they cannot bear." At length we reached the end of our railway journey. Marmaros Szigeth is the present terminus of the line, and I should say will very probably remain such; for the iron road would hardly meander through the defiles and over the heights of the Carpathians, to descend into the sparsely-inhabited wilds of the Bukovina. We sought out the principal inn at Szigeth, a wretched place, with only one room and a single bed at our disposal.

My friend took possession of the bed at my request, for I told him I was quite independent of the luxury, having provided myself before I left England with an excellent hammock made of twine. I had learned to sleep in these contrivances during my naval volunteer days, but the order to "sling hammocks" would not have been easy to obey under the present circumstances. I was forced to

put my screws in the floor and hang my net o
some heavy furniture; but when I got in, the ta
that I had chiefly depended upon gave way wit
crash, and I found myself on the floor. My fri
laughed heartily; he had never seen a hamm
before, and, spite of my representations, I do
think he was properly impressed by the great util
of the invention. Of course I was not to be foil
so I cast about for another method of "fixing."
tried several dodges, but nothing answered exact
something always gave way after a few minutes
repose—either I came down with a bump, or so
abominable, ramshackle chest of drawers got ov
turned.

Now my friend was very tired and sleepy, a
desired nothing so much as a little repose.
experiments ceased to interest him, and the n
caused by my repeated misfortunes irritated h
A large-minded man would have admired my t
acity of purpose, but he did not. One can ne
tell what people are till we travel with them.
a tone of mingled solicitude and irritation he offe
to vacate his bed in my favour. He declared
would willingly lie on the hard floor, or indeed,
would only consent to take his place, he would
bolt upright in a chair through the livelong nigh

"I will do anything," he added piteously,

you will only be quiet and not try to hang yourself any more in that horrible netting."

I would not hear of my friend leaving his bed, and after one or two more mischances self and hammock were suspended for the night at an angle a trifle too low for the head. Except for the honour and glory of the thing, perhaps I might have slept as well on the floor; but one does not carry a patent contrivance all across Europe to be balked of its use after all.

My friend woke me once during the night by shaking me roughly. He said I had nightmare, and made "such a devil of a row that he could not sleep." I have some dreamy recollection of finding myself in a London drawing-room in the inexpressibly scanty garments of a Rusniack, and when I turned to leave in all decent haste I found the way barred by an insolent fellow with the head of a buffalo bull. When I awoke in the early morning I found my friend already dressed and rather sulky. He observed that he had never met a man so addicted to nightmare as myself, adding, that another time if I must sleep in my hammock, it would be better to see that the head was higher than the feet.

"It does not make any difference to me," I replied cheerfully, "I am as fresh as a lark."

There was no time for further discussion, for our breakfast was ready (a very bad breakfast it was, too), and the vehicle we had chartered the night before was also waiting to convey us some miles into the interior of the country, to the soda manufactory at Boeska. On our way we passed through the village of Karasconfalu, inhabited entirely by Polish Jews. The dirt and squalor of this place beggar description. The dwellings are not houses, but are simply holes burrowed in the sandbanks, with an upright stone set up in front to represent a door; windows and chimneys are unknown. If it were not for a few erections more like ordinary human habitations, the place might have passed for a gigantic rabbit-warren. As we drove through we saw some of the villagers engaged in slaughtering calves and sheep in the middle of the road, the blood running down into a self-made gutter; it was a sickening sight. The people themselves have a most peculiar physiognomy, especially the men, who in addition to long beards wear corkscrew ringlets, which give them a very odd appearance. Their principal garment is a kind of long brown dressing-gown, which in its filthy grimness suits the wearer down to the ground. The feet are bound up in thongs of leather. The shoemaker's trade is apparently unknown in these parts. The inhabitants of this delightful village have the reputation of

being a set of born cheats and swindlers; if it is true, then certainly the moral is plain, that dishonesty is not a thriving trade. The fact is, being all of one sort, the profession is overcrowded, and the result is that the sharpest amongst them emigrate, or rather I should say go farther a-field to exercise their craft. I am told that many of the low Jews, who make themselves a byword and a reproach by their practices of cheating and usury throughout Hungary, may be traced back to this foul nest in the Marmaros Mountains. It would be well for the credit of the Jewish community in Hungary, as well as elsewhere, if something were done to raise these people out of the utter degradation which surrounds them from their birth.

Not far beyond Karasconfalu we came upon Boeska, situated in the midst of the most beautiful and romantic scenery, not at all suggestive of the neighbourhood of a chemical manufactory. Putting up at the house of the manager of the works, we remained here two or three days, during which time we made some excursions into the heart of the mountains. One of our drives took us some miles along the side of the beautiful river Theiss, which though a proverbial sluggard when it reaches the plain, is here a swift and impetuous stream. Our object was to see the timber-rafts pass over the rapids; it was a very exciting

scene, and as this was a favourable season, owing to the state of the river, we came in just at the right time. The Rusniacks—the people generally employed in this perilous work—certainly display great skill and coolness in the management of their ticklish craft. If by any mischance the timbers come in contact with the rocks, then the danger is extreme; and hardly a year passes that some of the poor fellows do not get carried away in the swirling waters, which have made for themselves deep and treacherous holes in this part of the stream.

The pine-trees in the forests of the Marmaros Mountains are simply magnificent; the birch and oak are hardly less remarkable. It is really grievous to see the amount of ruthless destruction which is allowed to go on in these valuable forests, more especially in those belonging to the State. It is the old story—the Rusniack herdsman, to get herbage for his cattle, will set fire to the forest, and perhaps burn some hundreds of acres of standing timber. The result brings very little good to himself; but the blackened trunks of thousands of half-burned trees bear witness to the peasant's inveterate love of waste, and the utter inefficiency of the forest laws, or rather of their administration. Throughout Hungary it is the same, the power of the law does not make itself felt in the remoter

provinces. For example, in the year 1877 there have been scores of incendiary fires in the county of Zemplin; homesteads, hayricks, and woods have suffered, and yet punishment rarely falls on the offender. Government should look to this, for lawlessness is a most infectious disorder.

The Marmaros district is chiefly known for the salt mines, which have been worked here for centuries. Salt is a Government monopoly in Hungary, and is sold at the high price of five florins the hundredweight, forming, in fact, an important source of revenue. The mines at Slatina, not far from Szigeth, are well worth a visit. One of the chambers is of immense size; in this a pyramid of salt is left untouched, and by its downward growth marks the progress of excavation. At the foot of this pyramid is a little altar, where every year, on the 3d of March, mass is celebrated with great ceremony, that being the day of Kunigunde, the patron saint of the mines.

One of our expeditions was to visit the mines at Ronasick. Here, too, is an enormous cave with a dome-shaped roof, one hundred and fifty feet above the surface of the water, which covers the floor to the amazing depth, it is said, of three hundred feet. Part of the visitor's programme is to be paddled about on this subterranean lake. We

embarked on a raft slowly propelled by rowers; a cresset fire burning brightly at the prow of our craft cast strange lights and shadows on the black waters, added to which the shimmering reflection of the white-ribbed walls had a very singular effect. But the sensation was still more weird when we saw other mystic forms appearing from out the black darkness; first a mere speck of red light was visible, till nearing us we beheld other boats freighted with grim-looking figures that glided past into the further darkness. These phantom-like forms, steering their rafts through the black and silent waters, were grotesquely lit up from time to time by the pulsating red fire-light. It might have been a scene from Dante's 'Inferno'!

It was with the sense of escape from a living tomb that we emerged from the depths below into the upper air, and here awaited us a sight never to be forgotten, more especially for its singular contrast to the horrid gloom of the under-world. Here, above ground, in the blessed free expanse of earth and sky, we beheld the heavens ablaze with all the intensest glory of a magnificent sunset. One's soul in deep gladness drank in the ineffable loveliness of nature, as if athirst for the beauty of light and life.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Tokay district—Visit at Schloss G—— —Wild-boar hunting—Incidents of the chase.

My first expedition to the Tokay district was in the winter; I was then the guest of Baron V——, who has a charming château, surrounded by an English garden, in this celebrated place of vineyards.

In the winter there is a very fair amount of good sport in this part of Hungary. Sometimes one is enabled to go out hare-shooting in sledges; of course the horses' bells are removed on these occasions. Hares are not preserved in the Tokay district, but they are pretty numerous. I myself shot fifty-four in the space of a few weeks, which is nothing compared to an English battue of a single day; but then this is sport, and there is immense pleasure in dashing right across country behind a pair of fleet horses, thinking yourself well repaid if you bag a couple or three hares in the afternoon's scamper. For wolf and wild-boar hunting one must penetrate into the forests which extend in the

rear of the southern slopes of this Tokay range of hills.

During my stay at G—— a party was got up for a few days' shooting in the interior. On this occasion we were to shoot in Baron Beust's forests, which extend over an area of about forty miles square; as it may be supposed, the sport is not the easy affair it is in the well-stocked parks of Bohemia.

There was not snow enough for sledging, so we drove to the rendezvous on wheels, using the springless carts of the country, the roads being far too rough for ordinary carriages. Wrapped in our *bundas*, we were proof against the cold. The wolf-skin collar turned up rises above the head and forms a capital protection; and very necessary it was on this occasion, for there was a keen cutting wind the day we started.

I carried a smooth-bore breechloader charged with the largest buck-shot in one barrel and with a bullet in the other. In Hungary the forests are usually so thick that one scarcely ever fires at a long range, and heavy shot at a short distance in a thicket is better than a bullet. After driving in a break-neck fashion for about two hours we arrived at the river Bodrog, a tributary of the Theiss. Nearly every winter the country hereabouts is under water; I remember once seeing it when there

was all the appearance of an extensive inland sea. Sometimes the inundations are disastrous, but the ordinary flood is an accepted event, and no damage accrues beyond the prevalence of marsh fever in April and May, when the water recedes. This part of the country offers first-rate wildfowl-shooting in the season.

Everywhere in Hungary the different races are strangely mixed up together: the Tokay Hegyalia, it is true, is chiefly peopled by Magyars, and the language is said to be the purest Magyar spoken anywhere; but there are Slavs and Jews amongst them, and our drive of twenty miles brought us into an area where the Slavs predominate. The difference of these races is very marked: the one, fair complexioned and blue eyed; the Magyar, dark, almost swarthy amongst the lower classes. At Olasz-Liszka, a small town within the Tokay district, there is an Italian colony, as the name Olasz (Italian) would imply. As long ago as the days of Bela II. this place was peopled by Italian immigrants from the neighbourhood of Venice, invited hither by the king, who greatly encouraged the cultivation of the vine.

Go where you will in this country, there is a Babel of tongues. In this instance our special coachman was a Bohemian, speaking his own

language—a very different dialect from the Slovacks who were the "beaters" for our hunt. The gamekeepers, or rather the foresters (for the game is of secondary consideration), were all Magyars. Their language, as we know, bears no affinity to any of the rest. The marvel is that the world gets on at all down here. The gentlemen of our party spoke together indifferently German, French, and English.

It is curious to hear the peasant come out with, "Why the Tartar are you doing this?" for an angry expletive. It is a relic of the old troubled times when the country suffered from the frequent depredations of Turks and Tartars. The Tokay district, say the chronicles, was fearfully harassed by the Turks as late as 1678.

It is worth while recalling a contemporaneous fact. In 1529 the crescent had been substituted for the cross on the Cathedral of Vienna to propitiate the Turks, and it was not till 1683 that the symbol of the dreaded Moslem was removed. When the Hungarians ceased to fear the Turk, they ceased to hate him; and since 1848 they remember only the generous hospitality of the Porte, and the cruel aggressions and treachery of the Russians. The Slav has a longer memory, for to this day he repeats the saying, "Where the Turk comes, there no grass grows."

When we arrived at our destination our appetites were far too keenly set to think about the Eastern Question, and right glad were we to see active preparations for supper. The national dishes, the *gulyas hus* and the *paprika handl*, were produced amongst a number of other good things, such as roast hare. You get to like the *paprika*, or red pepper, very much. I wonder it is not introduced into English cookery, it makes such a pretty-coloured gravy. If the traveller finds himself attacked by marsh fever, and should chance to be without quinine (a great mistake, by the way), let him substitute a spoonful of *paprika* mixed with a little red wine, repeating the dose every four hours if necessary. While smoking our peace-pipes after supper, one of the keepers came in to announce the welcome fact that it was snowing hard; fresh-lain snow would materially increase our chances of tracking the wild-boar.

Next morning when we started the weather had somewhat cleared, which was just as well, seeing we had to walk two or three miles to our first battue. Arrived at the rendezvous, we found the "beaters" waiting for us. They were a wild-looking crew were those Slovacks, with shaggy coats of black sheepskin, and in their hands the usual long staff with the axe at one end. Notwith-

standing their uncouth appearance, later experience has shown me that the Slovacks, as a rule, are patient, hard-working people.

The forest where we were consisted entirely of beech and oak. The acorns attract the wild-boar, which have increased in a very remarkable manner in this locality. I was told that twenty years ago there were no wild-boar in these forests, while now there are hundreds. This seems odd, for the oak-trees are pretty well as old as the hills, and offered the same temptation in the way of food formerly as now. In fact the increase of the wild-boar is a serious nuisance to the vine-grower, for they tramp across to the southern hill-slopes, and occasionally make raids on the vineyards, devouring the grapes with unparalleled greediness, and what is still worse, they will sometimes plough up and destroy a whole plot of carefully-tended vineyard.

Formerly there were many deer in these forests, but now there are only a few roedeer. We saw no traces of wolves on this occasion, but there are plenty in this part of the country.

We were only ten guns, and were soon posted each man in his proper position waiting for the *schwarzwild*, as the Germans say; but, alas! nothing appeared till the beaters themselves came in sight. So we had to organise battue number two. The

beaters walk quietly forward, tapping the trees now and then. This is quite noise enough for the purpose of rousing the game; if they shouted or made too much row, the game would get wild and scared.

In the next battue I had hardly been five minutes at my post when I heard from behind the breaking of dead branches, as of some animal advancing slowly. It was a fine buck which made his appearance, but he scented me and made off. Again about a hundred yards off I got a glimpse of him between the trees. I fired with effect. We found him afterwards about two hundred yards farther on, where he had fallen. It was very provoking; up to lunch-time we sighted no wild-boar, though we saw by the snow that they must have been about the hill-side during the night. We had soon a good fire blazing, at which robber-steak was nicely cooked. I never enjoyed anything more. We washed down our repast with good Tokay.

After luncheon we commenced work again. By this time we had advanced into the very heart of the forest. The smooth boles of the tall beech-trees looked grand in their winter nakedness, rising like columns from the white frost-bespangled ground. I took up my stand, gun in readiness, waiting for the tramp, the snort, or the grizzly dark form of the

wild-boar, but nothing came to disturb the utter solitude of the scene.

But hark! I hear shots fired repeatedly in the lower valley. I, too, begin to look out with quickened pulse, peering into the misty depths of the forest, and with ear alert for every sound, but all to no purpose. Nothing comes my way, though again I hear two more shots echo sharply in the narrow valley nearer to me than before. After the lapse of a few minutes the beaters came up, breaking through the dead branches of undercover. I knew now that my own chance was gone, but I was curious to know what had happened, and joining two of my friends whose "stand" had been near mine, we hurried down the valley to see what sport had turned up for the other guns. On inquiry it appeared that at least seventy wild-boars had passed close to one of our party, but the sight of so many at once had made his aim unsteady, and he only succeeded in wounding one of the number. The animal had dashed into the half-frozen stream at the bottom of the valley, and our friend had to reload and give him his final shot there.

We formed one more battue, but nothing came of it, and it was already high time to return to our quarters, for the whole scene was growing dim in the wintry twilight. Some of the party, myself

included, went by arrangement to the house of one of the foresters. The good people, in their desire to be hospitable, gave us a warm reception. They had heated the rooms to such an extent that we were almost baked alive.

The next morning we resumed our sport. During the first battue eight wild-boars were sighted. One was shot instantly; the others broke through the line of beaters, but in doing so a very unusual thing happened, for one of the foresters succeeded in killing a boar by a tremendous blow from his axe. We were very much surprised that the animal had come near enough, for as a rule they will not approach human beings except when wounded, and then they are most formidable assailants. I regret to say that one of our dogs was ripped up by one of this herd of eight.

This was the beginning and end of our sport for the day. Our indifferent luck was to be accounted for from the fact of there being, comparatively speaking, not much snow.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Tokay vineyards—The vine-grower's difficulties—Geology of the Hegyalia—The Pope's compliment to the wine of Tállya—Towns of the Hegyalia—Farming—System of wages at harvest—The different sorts of Tokay wine.

THE vintage is the season of all others for Tokay; in former days it was a very gay affair, for then every noble family in Hungary, especially the bishops, had vineyards in the Hegyalia, and the magnates came to the vintage with large retinues of servants and horses; and feasting and hospitality were the order of the day. In the good old times every important event in the family was celebrated by much drinking of Tokay, but in these degenerate days other fashions prevail. Before their kingdom was dismembered the Poles were the best customers for Tokay wine, but they are too poor now to have such luxuries; added to this, Russia has for nearly a century past laid an almost prohibitive duty on Hungarian wine. The fiscal impositions of Austria have also weighed heavily on Hungary's productions. At present North Germany and Scandinavia are

amongst the most ready purchasers of Tokay; and England is beginning to appreciate the "Szamarodni" or "dry Tokay," remarkable for the absence of all deleterious sweetness.

In good years the vintage of Tokay may be estimated at something like 150,000 *eimers*, an *eimer* being about two and a half gallons; but a really good year is the exception, not the rule. For three years (since 1874) the vintages have all been below the average. The season of 1876 was a complete failure; a disastrous frost on the 19th of May in that year completely destroyed the hopes and prospects of the vine-grower. Indeed he has a trying life of it, for his hopes go up and down with the barometer. If his vines escape the much-dreaded May frosts, there is a risk that the summer may be too wet for the grapes, which love sunshine. Then, again, in the hottest summers there are violent hail-storms, and in half an hour he may see his promising crop beaten to the ground. It has been well remarked that "the weather seems to have no control over itself in Hungary."

The vine-grower's troubles do not end when the vintage is successfully over. Tokay is a troublesome wine in respect to fermentation; it requires three years before it can travel, and even when these critical years are over, the wine will sometimes get

"sick" in the spring—at the identical time when the sap rises in the living plant.

The unique quality of the Tokay is due to the soil, and perhaps to some other conditions; but not to the peculiarity of the grape, for, as a matter of fact, they grow a variety of sorts. The cultivation of the vine appears to be of great antiquity in this part of the world. The introduction of the plant is attributed to the inevitable Phœnician; but, treading on more assured historic ground, we find that King Bela IV., in the thirteenth century, caused new kinds of grapes to be imported from Italy, and brought about an improvement generally in the culture of the vine.

But to return to the question of the soil. The Tokay Eperies group of hills is one of several well-defined groups of volcanic rocks that exist in Hungary and Transylvania. In the Tokay district the formations are partly eruptive, partly sedimentary, but nowhere older than the Tertiary period, say the geologists. The Hegyalia (which means "mountain-slopes" in the Magyar tongue) forms the southern spur of the extended volcanic region, composed of trachyte and rhyolithe, beginning at Eperies and terminating in the conical hill of Tokay, which protrudes itself so singularly into the Alföld, or plain.

But the vine-growing district does not end at

Tokay; it continues on the eastern slopes of the mountain range as far as Uihely, forming two sides of an irregular triangle, and the total length, say from Szanto in the west to Tokay, and from Tokay to Uihely, being about thirty-eight miles.

As a matter of fact, Tokay, which gives its name to the wine, does not produce the best vintage; other localities are more esteemed. Tállya, for example, situated a few miles east of Szanto, has long been renowned. As early as the sixteenth century the excellence of the wine from this district was acknowledged by infallible authority. It appears that during the sitting of the Council of Trent, wines were produced from all parts for the delectation of the holy fathers. George Draskovics, the Bishop of Fünfkirchen, brought some of his celebrated vintage, and presenting a glass of it to the Pope, observed that it was *Tállya* wine. Whereupon his Holiness pronounced it to be nectar, surpassing all other wines, exclaiming with ready wit, "Summum Pontificum *talia* vina decent." This place, so happily distinguished by Papal wit, is pleasantly situated on the side of the hill; it possesses about 2100 acres of vineyards.

The places in the Hegyalia are all called towns, though in reality they are not much more than large villages. Tokay has 4000 inhabitants; it is

at the foot of the hill, close to the junction of the Theiss and the Bodrog; a ruined castle forms a picturesque object in the foreground, and beyond is the far-stretching plain. Professor Judd says[1] that at one period of their history "the volcanic islands of Hungary must have been very similar in appearance to those of the Grecian Archipelago." Looking at the conical-shaped hill of Tokay, and the other configurations of the range, it is quite easy to take in the idea, and under certain atmospheric conditions the great plain very closely resembles an inland sea.

At Tokay the Theiss becomes navigable for steamers, but the circuitous course of the river prevents much traffic, more especially since the extension of railways. The next place is Tarczal, and here the Emperor of Austria has some fine vineyards. Some people have an idea that all the wine grown in the whole district is Imperial Tokay, and that the vineyards themselves, one and all, are imperial property. This is very far from being the case; in fact, since 1848, the peasant proprietors hold more largely than any other class. The easy transfer of land facilitates the purchase of small lots, and the result is that every peasant in the Hegyalia tries to possess himself of an acre or two, or

[1] Ancient Volcanoes of Hungary.

even half an acre of vineyard. The cultivation seems to pay them well; but a succession of bad seasons must be very trying, for the vineyards cannot be neglected be the year good or bad.

At Zombar, a village in this locality, there is a good instance of what can be got out of reclaimed land; it was formerly under water for the greater portion of the year. The soil is so rich in decayed vegetable matter as to be almost black, and now grows excellent crops of tobacco and Indian corn. The country north-east of Tokay is certainly the most picturesque side, there is more foliage, and there is also water.

The first time I drove through Bodrog-Keresztur, which is on this side, I thought that, notwithstanding the pretty country, I had never seen so desolate a place. The town was once famed for its markets, but the railways have changed all this; almost every other house is a ruin, and large trees may be seen growing between the walls.

In the last century a company of Russian soldiers were stationed here for the purpose of buying Tokay wine for the Russian Court.

One of the prettiest little places in the Hegyalia is Erdö-Benye; it is off the main road, right in amongst the hills. It boasts the largest wine-cellar in the whole district; it has twenty-two ramifica-

tions at two different levels, the whole being cut out of the solid rock; it is more like a subterranean labyrinth than a cellar. This place was formerly the property of the renowned family of Rákoczy, who played no mean part in Hungarian history. Not far from Erdö-Benye are mineral-water baths, romantically situated in the oak-forest.

Sáros Patak and Uihely are the two most noteworthy towns in the north-eastern side of the Tokay triangle. The first named has a Calvinist college of some considerable reputation, a library of 24,000 volumes, a printing-press, and a botanical garden. Uihely is the county town of Zemplin. An agricultural show was held here last spring (1877), which I attended. Our English-made agricultural implements were very much to the fore on this occasion. Some people complain of these machines on the score of their getting out of order rather easily, and of the immense difficulty of having them repaired in the country. This objection, I have heard, does not apply alike to all the English makers. At this show there were some new kinds of wine-presses which attracted a good deal of attention; before long no doubt not a few changes will be effected in the process of wine-making in Tokay. Considering that Hungary holds the third rank in Europe as a wine-producing country, the

whole question of the manipulation of wine is a very important one for her.

Amongst the live stock at this show I noticed some very fine merino sheep. In Hungary the wool-producing quality is everything in sheep, as mutton has hardly any value. This was only a country show, and the horses, from an Englishman's point of view, were not worth looking at; but there are plenty of fine horses in Hungary. The Government has been at immense pains to improve the breed by introducing English and Arabian sires. For practical purposes the native breed must not be decried; the Hungarian horse, though small, has many excellent qualities. For ordinary animals the prices are very low, which fact does not encourage the peasants to take much care of the foals. On this occasion I bought a couple of horses for farming purposes; the two only cost me about £11.

With regard to farming, our English notions of "high farming" will not do in Hungary; what is called the "extensive system" pays best. For instance, if I were already farming, and had some disposable capital at hand, I should find it pay me better to invest in buying more land than in trying to increase the produce of what I had already in hand. After some practical experience in the country, I have no hesitation in saying that Hungary

offers a good field for the employment of English capital.

Vineyards, on the other hand, can only be worked "intensively." Nothing requires more care and attention. To begin with, the aspect of the vine garden influences the quality of the wine immensely. Then there is the soil. The best is the plastic clay (*nyirok*), which appears to be the product of the direct chemical decomposition of volcanic rock. This clay absorbs water but very slowly, and is, in short, the most favourable to the growth of the vine. As the vines are mostly on the steep hillsides, low walls are built to prevent the earth from being washed away. In the early spring one of the first things to be done is to repair the inevitable damage done by the winter rain or snow to these walls, and to clear the ditches, which are carefully constructed to carry off the excess of water. I should observe that in the autumn, soon after the vintage, the earth is heaped up round the vines to protect them from the intense cold which prevails here, and directly the spring comes, one must open up the vines again. In Tokay the vines are never trellised, they are disposed irregularly, not even in rows—the better to escape the denudation of their roots by rain. Each vine is supported by an oak stick, which, removed in autumn, is

replaced in spring after the process of pruning. When the young shoots are long enough they are bound to these sticks, and are not allowed to grow beyond them.

No less than three times during the summer the earth should be dug up round the roots of the vine, and it is very desirable to get the second digging over before the harvest, for when harvest has once commenced it is impossible to get labourers at any price. The harvest operations generally begin at the end of June, and last six weeks. In the part of Hungary of which I am now speaking the labourer gets a certain proportion of the harvest. In this district he has every eleventh stack of corn, and as they are fed as well during the time, a man and his wife can generally earn enough corn for the whole year. The summers are intensely hot, and the work in consequence very fatiguing. The poor fellows are often stricken with fever, the result, in some cases, of their own imprudence in eating water-melons to excess.

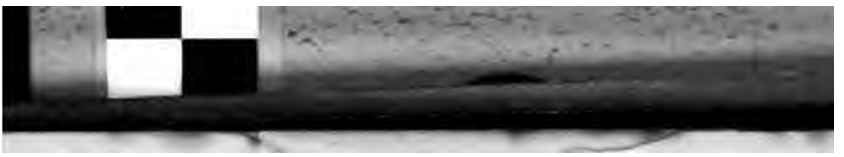
It is not till the third or fourth week in October that the vintage is to be looked for. It is not the abundance of grapes that makes a good year; the test is the amount of dried grapes, for it is to these brown withered-looking berries that the unique

character of the wine is due. If the season is favourable, the over-ripe grapes crack in September, when the watery particles evaporate, leaving the rasin-like grape with its undissipated saccharine matter.

In order to make "Essenz," these dry grapes are separated from the rest, placed in tubs with holes perforated at the bottom. The juice is allowed to squeeze out by the mere weight of the fruit into a vessel placed beneath. After several years' keeping this liquid becomes a drinkable wine, but of course it is always very costly. This is really only a liqueur. The wine locally called "Ausbruch" is the more generally known sweet Tokay, a delicious wine, but also very expensive. It is said to possess wonderfully restorative properties in sickness and in advanced age.

Another quality, differently treated, but of the same vintage, is called "Szamarodni," now known in the English market as "dry Tokay." This dry wine preserves the bouquet and strength of the ordinary Tokay, but it is absolutely without any appreciable "sweetness." In order to produce Szamarodni the dry grapes must not be separated from the others. The proportion of alcohol is from twelve to fifteen per cent.

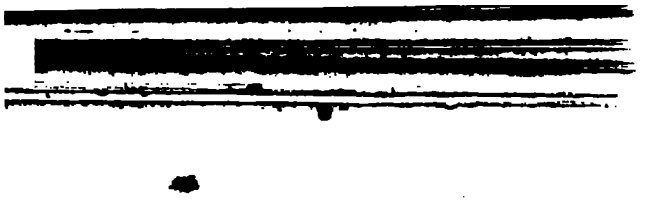
When first I saw the vintage in the Tokay district,

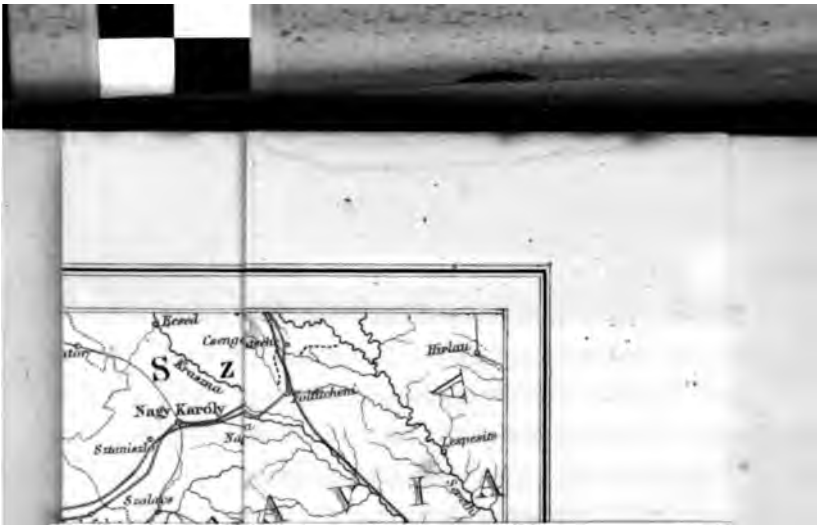


I was greatly interested in the novelty of the whole scene. It is well worth the stranger's while to turn aside from the beaten track and join for once in this characteristic Hungarian festivity, for nowhere is the Magyar more at home than in the vine-growing Hegyalia.

THE END.

MUIR AND PATERSON, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.




Nagy Károly

